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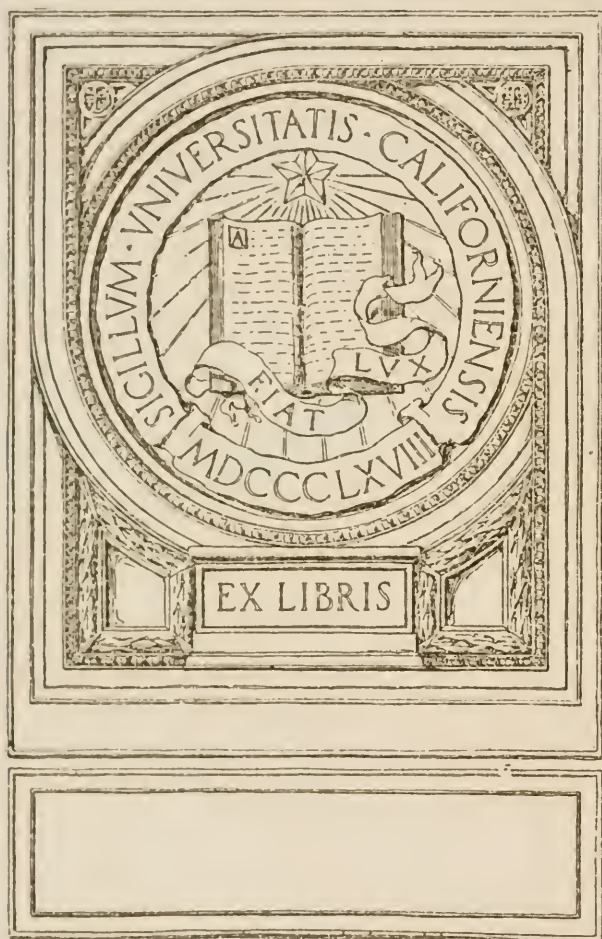
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HEGELIANISM

AND

HUMAN PERSONALITY

EXCHANGE







University Studies No. 10

# HEGELIANISM AND HUMAN PERSONALITY

BY

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## PREFACE.

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THE conclusions embodied in this essay are the outcome of many years of study of and reflection on the Philosophy of Hegel. For many years, I was satisfied with the usual British interpretation of Hegel and accepted it without reserve. My attitude of that time is expressed in my little book, *Two Essays on Theology and Ethics*, published nearly twenty years ago (now republished under the title of *Two Essays on General Philosophy and Ethics*), and in numerous articles written subsequently. I have not now departed from Hegelian principles. Not in the least. I remain an adherent of the Idealistic School, a humble follower of the great masters—Hegel, Green, Caird, Stirling and others who have profoundly influenced me and moulded my intellectual life. This essay is written from the Hegelian stand-point. I only give a new interpretation of Hegel and am convinced that it is the right interpretation. My present views are not inconsistent with those of the *Two Essays*. They are only a further development of them. How that development came about, I shall briefly indicate.

Some years ago, my attention was directed to the phenomenon of multiple personality and the problem arose in my mind: How is this fact to be harmonised with the Idealistic theory of the unity of the self. I have always been of opinion that a philosophy which is opposed to empirical facts and cannot give a rational interpretation of them stands self-condemned. As I said in my article on the "Conception of the Absolute" in the *Philosophical Review*, (New York) "a conception of the Absolute which is violently opposed to the conclusions of science and the sober common sense of practical men must, at once, be rejected as such, however plausible and unanswerable may be the arguments urged in its

behalf. A theory that is not congruous with well-verified facts is worse than an idle dream." I could not, therefore, continue to hold the Idealistic theory of the unity of the self, unless it was capable of being reconciled with the fact of multiple personality. I was greatly perplexed and was beginning to waver in my allegiance to Idealism when a flood of new light was, for me, thrown upon the pages of Hegel. I discovered that Hegel, after all, does *not* teach that the Absolute is a unitary personality. His real theory is that the Absolute is a unity differentiated into *persons*. It, in one word, is the organic unity of selves —the very thing that multiple personality is! I found a solution and my difficulties were over. I, however, shrank from publishing my views and kept them to myself for several years. Who would have believed that an obscure Indian student has discovered the real meaning of Hegel, especially when it is claimed that that meaning is that the differentiations of the Absolute are persons. Probably the consequence of publishing such a theory would have been that, in some quarters, it would have been regarded as one more evidence of the total failure of university education in India.

Early in 1909, I read for the first time, Dr. J. E. McTaggart's *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*. I was greatly delighted to find that he also concludes that the Absolute is a unity differentiated into selves. To find myself supported by so eminent an authority, was a great joy and encouragement to me. But though I agree with Dr. McTaggart in thinking that the Absolute is a unity differentiated into *persons*, my differences with him are serious. I hold that the Absolute is a self-conscious unity of its constituent selves, while Dr. McTaggart is of opinion that it is an impersonal unity of persons. I have subjected Dr. McTaggart's theory to a somewhat searching criticism. This criticism was necessary to develop my own theory. I now decided to publish my views. There was no longer any reason to feel diffident. I am glad to go forth into the world partially supported by the high authority of Dr. McTaggart.



The theory advanced in this thesis appears to me likely to provide a philosophical foundation for the empirical fact of multiple personality. It also explains what the "subliminal self" of man is, to the existence of which recent investigations point. Further, it shows the way to a reconciliation between Idealistic Monism and Pluralism.

The views of Dr. McTaggart to which reference has been made will be found in the chapters on "Human Immortality" and "The Personality of the Absolute" in his *Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*."

HIRALAL HALDAR.



# CONTENTS.



## CHAPTER I.

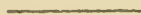
	PAGE.
THE ABSOLUTE AND HUMAN PERSONALITY	... 1

## CHAPTER II.

DR. McTAGGART ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE	
ABSOLUTE ... ..	... 28

## CHAPTER III.

THE ABSOLUTE AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE	... 40
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# HEGELIANISM AND HUMAN PERSONALITY.

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## CHAPTER I.

### THE ABSOLUTE AND HUMAN PERSONALITY.

"Interpreters of the Hegelian Philosophy," says Wallace, "have contradicted each other almost as variously as the several commentators on the Bible. He is claimed as their head by widely different schools of thought, all of which appeal to him as the original source of their line of argument." Perhaps on no subject connected with the Philosophy of Hegel has the divergence of opinion been more marked than on the question of the relation of human personality to the Absolute. In the judgment of critics of one class, Hegelianism is only revived Spinozism and merely inculcates the teachings of the great Jewish Philosopher in more puzzling and less straight-forward language purposely designed to make an old thought appear new. Human personality, we are asked to believe, is, in Hegel's view, only a transient modification of the Absolute, as evanescent and unsubstantial as the passing waves upon the surface of the ocean. In direct antithesis to this oft-repeated interpretation, we have the theory put forward by one of the ablest and latest expositors of Hegel that the Absolute is an impersonal unity, a *society* of finite but perfect individuals. Hegel's Absolute, Dr. McTaggart assures us, is "a unity of persons, but it is not a person itself" (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 58). Dr. McTaggart does not seem to be quite sure in his own mind that his interpretation of the nature of the Absolute Idea is the right one, for he tells us that he proposes "to consider not Hegel's own opinions on the personality of the Absolute, but the conclusions on the subject which ought logically to be



deduced from his conception of the Absolute as determined in the Logic." Dr. McTaggart's theory must be distinguished from that of the Hegelians of the Left, according to whom the Absolute is unconscious Reason and first comes to consciousness only in man. Dr. McTaggart however holds that the self-differentiations of the Absolute are "perfect finite persons," of some of whom our own selves are the imperfect and limited manifestations. Opposed to all these contradictory views is the conclusion of the bulk of the British expositors of Hegel that the Absolute is a person, a subject and not a mere substance, who necessarily reveals Himself in nature and more fully in man. A prolonged study of the philosophy of Hegel and the copious literature on it in the English language has brought me to the conclusion that the truth is to be found in the synthesis, in the Hegelian sense of the term, of the views of Caird, Wallace, and others on the one side, and of Dr. McTaggart on the other. My object in this essay is to expound and defend this thesis. There are three points of fundamental importance to be considered in connection with this subject. What is human personality, and how is it related to the personality of the Absolute, if it be a personality? How are the categories related to human knowledge and to the Absolute? What is the relation of the content of human experience to Reality? I propose to take up these points for discussion in succession.

Before we are in a position to determine the relation of man to the Absolute, it is necessary to acquire a clear comprehension of the nature of the Absolute. The commonly accepted view of the nature of Hegel's Absolute is that it is the self-conscious unity that comprehends within itself and transcends the relative distinction of subject and object. It is the central unity, the supreme spiritual principle, in which all things have their being and find their ultimate explanation and out of which they proceed. It is the absolute subject without relation to which no object can exist and whose own existence depends upon its manifestation in the universe of inter-related objects. Hegel's Absolute Idea is, as Dr.

Caird interprets it, "the idea of a self-consciousness which manifests itself in the difference of self and not-self that through this difference, and by overcoming it, it may attain the highest unity with itself." (*Hegel*, p. 182). It is not a unity in which all differences are lost; it is rather the unity which realises *itself* in the differences. The Absolute is not like the substance of Spinoza, omnipotent in swallowing up its modes but impotent to explain their origin. It is the unity of self-consciousness which exists in and through the plurality of finite objects and to which they refer themselves as their source and explanation. "The 'free' existence of the world," argues Dr. Caird, "as an external aggregate of objects in space, with no appearance of relation to mind, and the 'free' existence of each object in the world as external to the other objects and merely in contingent relation to them are characteristics which belong to these objects, just because they are the manifestations of a self-determined principle, which can realise itself only as it goes out of itself, or gives itself away, but which in this 'self-alienation' remains 'secure of itself and resting in itself.' On the other hand, this security of intelligence in the freedom of its object is possible just because its own nature is what it has given to the object which, therefore, in realising itself must return to its source." (*Ibid*, p. 198).

If the foregoing statement gives a correct representation of Hegel's conception of the Absolute, the charge of Pantheism cannot, of course, be legitimately brought against it. The essence of Pantheism is to lay such stress on the unity of all reality that the element of difference is simply ignored or explained away. But Hegelianism, as understood by its leading British exponents, accords equal recognition to the elements of unity and difference in the concrete whole—the Absolute. We are constantly reminded that the ultimate unity of self-consciousness is meaningless apart from the plurality of finite objects, and the plurality of finite objects presupposes and has its being in the unity of self-consciousness. "As the consciousness of the self," says Dr. Caird, "is



correlative with the consciousness of the not-self, no conception of either can be satisfactory, which does not recognise a principle of unity, which manifests itself in both, which underlies all their difference and opposition, and which must, therefore, be regarded as capable of reconciling them." (*Idealism and the Theory of knowledge*, p. 12). But in spite of this clear statement that in Hegel's system the unity of the Absolute is not incompatible with but presupposes the differences of Reality, Hegelianism has never been able to free itself from the imputation of Pantheism. It is easy to say that this is sheer misunderstanding, but a misunderstanding which cannot be removed even by the most lucid expositions of such a master of style as Dr. Edward Caird, must be presumed to have some justification. Now the main root of the misunderstanding, it seems to me, lies in the over-emphasis which is apt to be laid, unconsciously but inevitably, upon the supreme unity of self-consciousness to which all reality is traced, and in the line of cleavage, so to speak, which still remains between the subject and object in spite of the clearest possible demonstration of their correlativity. If all reality is at bottom one, and that unity is the unity of self-consciousness, its value and significance is necessarily greater than that of the mere object, however much the existence of the object may be implied in that of the self. The self is more than the object, and the object, in spite of its essential correlativity with the self, is, when compared with it, unconsciously reduced to the position of a mere shadow. The correlativity, that is to say, is apt to become rather one-sided. This tendency to exalt the self at the expense of the object is intensified by the fact that the correlativity of the subject and object is unable to bridge over the gulf that lies fixed between them. The subject may have no reality apart from the object and conversely, but the subject, be it remembered, is *not* the object, nor is the object, subject. What is more natural under the circumstances than that the object, unable to attain to the level of the subject, should dwindle into insignificance in comparison with it? And when in this manner

the objective world is tacitly taken to be less real than the unity of self-consciousness which is the basal principle of the universe, and, consequently, more and more stress is laid on the latter, the result is, if not Pantheism, something very like it. I do not, of course, argue that this is our explicit thought. On the contrary, so far as our conscious logic is concerned, we never allow ourselves to forget that "the real unity of the world manifests itself through its equally real differences." But the *under-current* of thought is what I have stated it to be. Emphasise the essential correlation of the self and not-self ever so much, the self is self and the not-self is not-self, and the two never come into touch with each other. As long as the matter stands thus, the unity of the self tends to be fatal to the plurality of mere objects, however close and vital may be the relation of the latter to the former.

The only way to avoid this difficulty, this irresistible drift towards Pantheism is to realise that the object in which the self manifests itself is not only *related* to the self, but *is* the self. Every object is also a subject and *vice-versa*. To say so is not to make a simple identification of the one with the other so as to obliterate all distinction between them. What is a subject from its own point of view is an object in relation to other selves. As a knowing self, a thing contains all other things within itself as its objects; but it, as an object, is itself embraced within the knowledge of the other things regarded as subjects. To A, regarded as a subject, B, C, D, E etc. are related as objects of its knowledge, but A itself is an object to B conceived as subject and so on. A, B, C, D and the rest are thus subjects and objects by turns. The unity of the Absolute is not something standing over against the differences of its objects. It is realised in the self-consciousness of each of its objects. It is a unity only in so far as it differentiates itself into the selves of its objects. It, in other words, is not an abstract unity, but a concrete and organic unity of its constituent selves. The Absolute present in the



self-consciousness of A, whole and undivided, has B, C, D and the rest as its objects, present completely in B as *its* self-consciousness, it has A and others as objects and so on. As Ribot says of the human self that it is a co-ordination, so we may say even of the Absolute, that it is not a single unitary personality, but a co-ordination of many selves—a self of selves. Such a conception is certainly not destructive to the unity of the Absolute. It, on the contrary, deepens it by showing that in thus going the round of its objects by successively becoming their selves, it remains securely one with itself, supreme and undivided. The idea may best be illustrated by the Leibnizian theory of the universe as a system of monads. Each monad is a complete whole which ideates the whole universe from its own point of view. The fundamental mistake of Leibnitz was to isolate the monads completely from each other. If we amend his theory by conceiving of the monads as in interaction with and organically related to each other, and regard the monad of monads not as a separate monad but as the unity of the monads realised in them, we shall get something analogous to the conception we need. So conceived, each monad would reproduce the whole universe within itself as its object, while it itself would form part of the objective world reproduced in the consciousness of the other monads, the monad of monads being the organic unity of all of them and its consciousness consisting of their consciousness. (1). The Absolute self, that is to say, is a society of selves correlated with the universe as a systematic whole of inter-related objects. (2). It, as the self of selves, has for its objective counter-part the universe as

(1) The monads of Leibnitz ideate the universe with different degrees of clearness and distinctness. But in the illustration given the monads must be supposed to reflect the universe, each from its own point of view, with perfect clearness. What Leibnitz calls imperfect monads would, on this supposition, be imperfect *manifestations* of the monads which as the constituent elements of the monad of monads—the Absolute, are all perfect.

(2) The term 'society' hardly conveys the meaning, but there is no suitable substitute for it. The personalities into which the Absolute is differentiated are unified in the absolute far more closely than are the individuals in society.



an organic whole, while its constituent selves are the selves of the particular objects which form parts of the world.

"There is a sense," says Dr. Caird, "in which every idealist must admit that the only object of mind is mind. Every one who holds that the real is relative to mind, and, therefore, that the difference between mind and its object cannot be an absolute difference, must acknowledge that whatever is real (and just so far as it is real) has the nature of mind manifested in it. Reality cannot be alien to the subject that knows it, nor can the intelligence comprehend any object except as it finds *itself* in it." (*Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers, Vol. I, p. 193.*) But he goes on to say that "it is not necessary to infer from this that every object, which is in any sense real thinks or is a thinking subject." (*Ibid*). It is not a question of inference however. As Dr. Caird himself admits, "the only object of mind is mind." Of course, every object is not a conscious subject in isolation from others or outside of the Absolute consciousness. But it can be an integral element of the Absolute personality only as having a self of its own. It is impossible to conceive of the Absolute, which is present, whole and undivided, as much in the meanest object as in the totality of nature, as a mere unity. It is a plurality as much as a unity. Dr. Caird is most emphatic in declaring that the unity of the Absolute embraces real differences. These differences, however, as self-differentiations of the Absolute cannot be *mere* objects. Objects which are the manifestations of a self, which cannot exist apart from the self, are, I submit, selves as much as objects. It is impossible to avoid this conclusion by arguing that there are differences of degree in Reality. Every object which is in relation to the consciousness of the Absolute, in which the Absolute consciousness is manifested, as it must be, completely and indivisibly, must partake of the perfection of the Absolute. If there are differences of degree in Reality, they belong to the fragmentary and incomplete manifestations of Reality and not to Reality itself. The *empirical* fact of the differences of

degree in Reality cannot stand in the way of the conclusion, reached on speculative grounds, that the total system of things in which the Absolute is revealed shares in its perfection. Now, if the total system of things is perfect, there must be a point of view from which every constituent element of it is perfect. It is impossible to say that the universe in which everything is imperfect is, as a whole, perfect. One inclined to take such a view would do well to remember Mr. Bradley's joke about the best of possible worlds in which everything is bad.

Dr. Caird seems to imply that the view that the self-differentiations of the Absolute are themselves selves leads to the conclusion that "nothing exists except minds and their states." Each object, we have seen, is a self from its own point of view and a not-self from the point of view of other objects. It is both a subject, or rather subject-object, and an object, but from different points of view. Every object, indeed, is from its own point of view not only a subject, but also an object to itself, but it is an object to itself in the same sense in which the body is the object of the self that animates it. What exist, therefore, are not minds and their *states* but minds and their *objects*, which objects, however, are themselves minds. Dr. Caird's objection can legitimately be urged only against a theory like that of Leibnitz which so cuts off things from each other that no sort of mutual influence is possible between them. Minds, therefore, become incapable of having any content except their own internal states. But a genuine Idealism conceives of objects as the differences in which the ultimate spiritual principle of unity is manifested, which is present in them as their selves, *particularised* but whole and undivided, and gathers them all up into itself without detriment to their distinctness.

Now the theory set forth above, I maintain, gives a correct and adequate representation of Hegel's conception of the Absolute. Most of the commentators of Hegel are agreed that the Absolute is a personality, but they lay so much stress

on its unity that they overlook the important fact that it is only as a co-ordination, a *community* of selves, that the Absolute is a self. I agree with Dr. McTaggart in thinking "that the element of differentiation and multiplicity occupies a much stronger place in Hegel's system than is generally believed." (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 3.). No one denies that the unity of the Absolute is, in Hegel's view, the correlative of and founded on its differences. But what is the nature of these differences? Are they mere objects? Objects they most assuredly are, but what is all but universally forgotten is that they are selves as well, selves which exist not on their own account or in isolation from and in total disregard of each other, but as integral elements of the Absolute Personality. They, organically related to each other, constitute the Absolute Personality. The phrase organic relation is indeed inadequate to express the truth. The union is much closer than any mere organic union can be. But, however close the union may be, it is not incompatible with, but is the other aspect of the *relative* independence of the selves. Dr. McTaggart has rendered a valuable service to higher philosophy by clearly proving that in Hegel's system the self-differentiations of the Absolute are not mere things, but *persons*. But he has also converted an important truth into a serious error by declaring that the Absolute is not a person. I shall have later on to examine his conclusion at some length. At present, I wish to dwell upon that part of his theory in which I am most heartily in agreement with him, and to cite further evidence from Hegel's works in support of it than he has found it possible to do. "We are certain," says Dr. McTaggart very truly, "that the doctrine of the Absolute Idea teaches us that all reality is spirit. No one, I believe, has ever doubted that this is Hegel's meaning. And it is also beyond doubt, I think, that he conceived this spirit as necessarily differentiated. Each of these differences, as not being the whole of spirit will be finite (1).

(1) Dr. McTaggart's use of the term "finite" is apt to be misleading. As each differentiation of the Absolute has others outside it, it is, of course,



It is the eternal nature of spirit to be differentiated into finite spirits." (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 7). Again, "The meaning of the Absolute Idea is that Reality is a differentiated unity, in which the unity, has no meaning but the differentiations, and the differentiations have no meaning but the unity. The differentiations are individuals for each of whom the unity exists, and whose whole nature consists in the fact that the unity is for them, as the whole nature of the unity consists in the fact that it is for the individuals. And, finally, in the harmony between the unity and the individuals neither side is sub-ordinated to the other, but the harmony is an immediate and ultimate fact." (*Ibid*, p. 19.)

Hegel defines the Absolute Idea thus: "The Idea, as unity of the subjective and objective idea, is the notion of the Idea,—a notion whose object is the Idea as such, and for which the objective is Idea,—an object which embraces all characteristics in its unity. This unity is consequently the Absolute and all truth, the Idea which thinks itself—and here at least as a thinking or Logical Idea." (*Hegel's Logic*, Wallace's Translation, Second Edition, pp. 373-74). This, to be sure, is one of the most enigmatical utterances of Hegel. It hardly affords us any clue to his inner meaning. Isolated passages and paragraphs, taken by themselves, will often be found to be of the same description. They are impenetrable and hard as adamant. The only way to compel this dark philosopher to surrender his meaning is laboriously and patiently to keep pace with him, with bad falls occasionally no doubt, as he explains the movement of the categories from Pure Being to the Absolute Idea. You must *think* with him, watch his thought, so to speak, in the making. One must understand the whole of Hegel or nothing of him. A hard task undoubtedly, but there is no way to avoid it. There is no royal road to the citadel of the Absolute Idea. Much help will also be found in the study of the application of his general finite, but inasmuch as its knowledge embraces the whole of Reality, it is Infinite in Hegel's sense of the term.

principles to the concrete facts of life and experience. In order, therefore, to acquire an insight into the meaning of the Absolute Idea, we must go back to the early stages of the dialectic. But even in the definition of it quoted above, it is easy to see that, in Hegel's view, the object of the Idea is itself Idea. The highest Reality—the unity of the subjective and objective Idea, “the notion of the Idea” has for its object *Idea*. The object of mind or spirit, in plainer language, is not a mere thing but mind.

The categories which first reveal Hegel's central thought, incompletely no doubt, but unmistakably, are the Infinite and Being-for-self. Hegel heartily endorses Spinoza's dictum, *Omnis determinatio est negatio*. Everything, in order to be, must have a determinate nature, but determination implies affirmation as much as negation. To say that something is, is also to say that it is not something else from which it is distinguished. “A thing is what it is, only in and by reason of its limit.” But that which limits it is itself another thing needing limitation as the condition of its rising into reality. “Something becomes an other; this other is itself somewhat; therefore it likewise becomes an other, and so on *ad infinitum*” (*Hegel's Logic, Wallace's translation, Second Edition, p. 174*). Thus arises endless progression or what Hegel calls the false infinite. In endless progression, we never leave the region of the finite, and have only a tedious iteration of it. Nor is the true infinite to be found somewhere beyond the finite. That which is beyond the finite, being outside it, is necessarily limited by it and is, therefore, only another finite. An infinite which steers clear of the finite and does not somehow include it within itself is a contradiction. The finite, as finite, passes over into another finite which, however, is not alien to it but is involved in its own being, is its *alter ego*. What thus passes over endlessly from one finite to another does in reality abide with itself. It is the *inner* being of the finite, the soul of it—the genuine Infinite. “Since what is passed into is quite the same as what passes



over, since both have one and the same attribute *viz.* to be an other, it follows that something in its passage into other only joins with itself. To be thus self-related in the passage and in the other, is the genuine infinity." (*Hegel's Logic, Wallace's Translation, Second Edition, P. 176.*) What is involved here is the negation of negation, the overcoming of the limit which finitude implies, and, consequently, self-restoration. Being thus restored through the negation but not cancellation of limit, Hegel calls Being-for-self.

"In Being-for-self," says Hegel, "enters the category of Ideality." (*Ibid, P. 178.*) This is a pronouncement of the utmost importance. The finite which returns upon itself through the negation of its limit is Infinite and, as such, ideal. The determinate Being, "Being-there-and-then" is limited and real, but as the unity which refers to itself in passing over into its other, it is ideal. "The truth of the finite is rather its ideality." Everything, therefore, which exists has a two-fold aspect. As a reality, it is finite and limited and excludes all other things from it; but as ideal it comprehends everything within itself. What is real is also ideal and the ideal must have reality and limitedness of being. "Man," observes Hegel shrewdly, "if he wishes to be actual, must be there and then, and to this end, he must set a limit to himself. People who are too fastidious towards the finite never reach actuality". (*Logic, Wallace's Translation, P. 173.*) The ideal and the real, the self and the object, body and soul are one and the same and the difference is one of aspects only. On its ideal side, an object is co-extensive with the universe itself—it is omniscient, but as real it is lowly and humble, takes its proper place among other reals and ties its ideal—its self down to itself. This explains how it is that every particular self includes all that it knows and yet excludes them. The reality of the ideal is its body and hence the body is not excluded in the same sense in which all other things are. (1). "Being-for-

(1) The interesting and suggestive thought of Leibnitz that the monad, which, as a spiritual entity, has the whole universe ideally within itself, is

self," says Hegel, "may be described as ideality, just as Being-there-and-then was described as reality. It is said that besides reality there is *also* an ideality. Thus the two categories are made equal and parallel. Properly speaking ideality is not somewhat outside of and beside reality: the notion of ideality just lies in its being the truth of reality. That is to say, when reality is explicitly put as what it implicitly is, it is at once seen to be ideality. Hence ideality has not received its proper estimation, when you allow that reality is not all in all, but that an ideality must be recognised outside of it. Such an ideality external to or it may be even beyond reality, would be no better than an empty name. Ideality only has a meaning when it is the ideality of something: but this something is not a mere indefinite this or that, but existence characterised as reality which if retained in isolation, possesses no truth." (*Logic, Wallace's Translation, pp. 172-78*).

Now it does not require much penetration to discern what Hegel is driving at. What he means to say is that the ideality of an object, its inmost essence, is its self. A thing, in so far as it is real, is only one among many things, but the ideal element of it, its unity of self-consciousness is that which has for its object the entire circle of reality. What, as an ideality, includes all other reals is, in so far as it is real, included in the ideal elements of other reals. Indeed Hegel, who at times is so obscure, does not leave us in any doubt as to his meaning on this point. He expressly says that Being-for-self is self-consciousness. "The readiest instance of Being-for-self is found in the "I". We know ourselves as existents, distinguished in the first place from other existents, and with certain relations thereto. But we also come to know this expansion of existence (in these relations) reduced, as it were, to a point in the simple form of Being-for-self. When we say "I", we express the reference to self which is infinite, and at the also a body through its own inherent limitedness—*materia prima*, does not, I think, usually get the consideration it deserves. It requires modification, no doubt, but it suggests an important truth.

same time negative." (*Logic, Wallar's Translation, P. 179*). The finite things in their ideality are Beings-for-self, unities of self-consciousness. The whole of reality exists in and for each of them and they exist in the whole. It is beyond doubt that in Being-for-self, we have a plurality of selves, a connected system of ideating centres, in each of which the whole world is reflected. What conceals this truth from view is, I suspect, the failure to distinguish Being-for-self from the category of the one and many which immediately follows it. Being-for-self, abstractly considered as a self-subsistent real, and in negative relation to others which it excludes, is one. The ideality is for the moment lost sight of and the mere Being-there-and-then, the somewhat, with the power, no doubt, of the ideal at its back, becomes the one. The profounder element is temporarily eclipsed and the development in the subsequent movement of the categories is, till the Notion is reached, mainly on the real side. A great inequality exists between the two elements of Being-for-self. Its ideal factor is already "I", but the side of reality is little better than a mere *Daseyn*. It is like a strong soul animating a frail body. The dialectical movement which follows serves to remove this disparity. A serious and needless difficulty is thrown in the way of properly apprehending Hegel's meaning by the erroneous supposition that the evolution of the categories is really as regular and rhythmical as he suggests it to be. On this subject Dr. McTaggart has thrown much valuable light, (*Vide Studies in Hegelian Dialectic*) but even he, I think, is inclined to suppose that there is more regularity of movement than is really the case. In Being-for-self, the sublime height of the Absolute Idea is already visible, dimly outlined in the distance, even from the low ground of the categories of quality, but in the process of the toilsome ascent to it, we, for long intervals, lose sight of it. If we take care to remember Hegel's explicit statement that "the readiest instance of Being-for-self is the "I", what we have at this stage is a plurality of selves, each infinite, confronting each other. The stress is laid decidedly on the aspect of



plurality, and it is the unity that is in danger of being overlooked. In later categories, Hegel, as I shall show, brings out prominently the aspect of unity and harmonises it with plurality, but the result gained in the earlier stages is not allowed to be missed. The later stages of the dialectic do not annul the earlier ones. The more developed categories enrich and supplement the poorer and more abstract categories, but what is once gained is never lost.

In the Notion, we have the Ideality of Being-for-self back again, deepened and enriched, and with the unity of the whole strongly emphasised, though the element of plurality is by no means ignored. "The Notion", says Hegel, "is a systematic whole, in which each of its constituent functions is the very total which the Notion is, and is put as indissolubly one with it. Thus in its self-identity it has original and complete determinateness" (*Logic, Wallace's Translation, P. 287*). The explication of the Notion, Hegel calls Development, in order to signalise the truth that in the unfolding of the categories under this section no new element is added, but what is implicit in the universal is made explicit. The Notion is not an abstract universal, but a concrete universal, which involves particularisation in the individuals of which it is a system. In it "the elements distinguished are without more ado at the same time declared to be identical with one another and with the whole, and the specific character of each is a free being of the whole Notion" (*Ibid, P. 289*). The function of the judgment is to show that the universal cannot abide with itself in aloofness from the individuals, but must particularise itself in them, while the syllogism demonstrates that these individuals must, on their part, surrender themselves to it and thereby become a systematic totality. It is to be doubted whether Hegel was happy in his choice of the terms notion, judgment and syllogism, with their inevitable subjective implications and association with Formal Logic to express his meaning. But what he seeks to convey through the terminology of Formal Logic is obvious. The Notion is

the spiritual principle of unity from which all things proceed and to which all things return. Each of these things is itself the Notion with a particular determination. "Each function and moment of the Notion is itself the whole Notion." The individual is the universal specified and determined in a particular way. It does not, however, exhaust the universal. A particular determination demands other determinations and every individual has other individuals as its *alter egos* and, therefore, in eternal and indissoluble fellowship with it. The relation between the universal and the individual, it is of the utmost importance to remember, is not one of the whole and the parts. This is a category which in the Hegelian dialectic is long left behind at the stage of the Notion. The universal, the whole, is differentiated into the individuals, each of which is itself a whole. "It is a macrocosm made up of microcosms, which is all in every part." The reality of the universal, it will thus be seen, lies in the individuals, so related to one another as to form an organic whole. Hegel would have fully endorsed Professor Seth Pringle-Pattison's dictum that the individual alone is real, only that care must be taken not to tear off the individual from other individuals and the systematic totality of them—the universal, to which it belongs. The relation between universality, particularity and individuality is thus expressed by Hegel: "The universal is the self-identical with the express qualification that it simultaneously contains the particular and the individual. Again, the particular is the different or the specific character, but with the qualification that it is in itself universal and is as an individual. Similarly the individual must be understood to be a subject or substratum which involves the genus and species in itself and possesses a substantial existence." (*Hegel's Logic, Wallace's Translation, pp. 294-95*).

The individual, it is essential to remember, is not a mere object. It being a specific determination of the Notion is like the Notion, a *self*. It is subject-object, the unity of the ideal and real, of the finite and the infinite, of soul and body.



The object is the individual with its subjectivity abstracted from. The Notion is realised in the individuals and the individuals live, move and have their being in the Notion. It is the unity of the whole that goes out of itself to them and only in this way reduces them to subordination to itself. "Every individual being", says Hegel, "is some one aspect of the Idea: for which, therefore, yet other actualities are needed, which in their turn appear to have a self-subsistence of their own. It is only in them altogether and in their relation that the Notion is realised" (*Hegel's Logic, Wallace's Translation, P. 353*). The Notion, in short, is a unity of self-consciousness which is a system, a totality, an organic unity of subordinate unities of self-consciousness, each of which, determined and particularised and thus *embodied* in an object, is a whole and infinite. At the stage of Being-for-self, we had the unity of the whole rather thrust into the background. Now, however, it is prominently forward, not extinguishing but vitalising the subordinate selves, the Beings-for-self, the individuals. It gives reality to them and apart from them it itself has no reality. Hegel's Absolute, we thus see, is the unity of the ideal and the real, which on the ideal side is a *community* of selves and on the real side a universe of inter-related objects.

The Notion completely developed and as a fully expressed totality of individuals is, when viewed externally, so to speak, the object. It, in its perfection, is the unity of the subject and the object—the Idea. Hegel begins with the ideality of the Notion and shows that when it is fully explicated, it is embodied in the object. The object, again, taken one-sidedly and in abstraction from the subject, is in contradiction with itself and leads us back to the ideal element, which is all along presupposed and without which it would not be. The evolution of objectivity towards ideality, we may pass over, as it is not of prime importance in illustrating our theme, but here also Hegel steadily keeps eye on the two aspects of Reality—unity and plurality. In object *qua* object, a reconciliation of these two moments is not possible, and it is

this contradiction which is the spring that makes the dialectical coach move forward at this point. The object, says Hegel, is a totality "which breaks up into distinct parts each of which is itself the totality". Now the dialectic, in the second section of the doctrine of the Notion, seeks to prove that the part which is an independent totality, and yet is subordinated to a more comprehensive totality, must be a spiritual unity.

In the categories of Life and Cognition, the correlativity of oneness and difference is further exhibited on a higher plane and the teleological character of the unity of the whole is explicitly brought out. Dr. McTaggart has fully dealt with these categories in arguing that the self-differentiations of the Absolute are persons and I do not, therefore, intend to say much about them. The importance of these categories lies in the fact that in them the unity of the Absolute is expressly shown to be a purposive unity. This is certainly implied in the conception of the whole which so sunders itself into parts as to remain in each of them a whole, the parts, on their side, returning in mutual fellowship to the source from which they proceed. But here the implied idea is made explicit and prominent, and immanent design becomes the ground-plan of the world. According to the category of Life, "Reality", to quote Dr. McTaggart, "is a unity differentiated into plurality (or a plurality combined into unity) in such a way that the whole meaning and significance of the unity lies in its being differentiated in that particular plurality, and that the whole meaning and significance of the parts of the plurality lies in their being combined into that particular unity". The consideration that unless the unity exists in and for each individual, the unity is bound to be fatal to the plurality makes it impossible for us to rest in the category of Life and compels the transition to Cognition and ultimately to the Absolute Idea. Complete satisfaction is found only in the idea of a system of organically inter-connected and inter-conscious individuals that proceed from and surrender themselves to a supreme

and all-embracing unity of self-consciousness realised in them and not beyond them.

The conclusion that the Absolute Idea is a spiritual principle of unity differentiated into selves, which have their being in it as organic elements of it, is confirmed by what Hegel says in part III of the *Philosophy of Religion*, in which he treats of "The Absolute Religion". In the important discussion of this subject, which throws considerable light on his meaning, he distinguishes between, "God in His eternal idea in and for self; the kingdom of the Father", "The eternal idea of God in the element of consciousness or ordinary thought, or the kingdom of the Son", and "The Idea in the element of the Church or spiritual community—the Kingdom of the Spirit". These constitute the three-fold aspect of the Absolute Spirit who, Hegel maintains, is correctly, though figuratively, represented as the Trinity. The first, it is easy to see, corresponds to the Absolute Idea of the Logic; the second to the externalisation of the Idea in nature and man, in so far as man is a natural being; and the third to the Absolute Spirit. God, the Father, or, as Hegel figuratively puts it, God as He was in Himself before creation, is not a unitary Being, but is Himself Triune (1). He differentiates Himself within Himself, without yet going out of Himself to nature and man. These self-differentiations of God are the Son, not the Son made flesh, but the Son who is eternally with God and is God. God, as the organic unity of these differentiations, is Spirit. Now nothing could be a greater mistake than to suppose that the differences in which the unity of the Absolute is realised constitute nature. This appears to be the current idea, but it is erroneous. Nature is the embodiment, the *incarnation* of the Son—the self-differentiations of God. These differences being of God *are* God. The differences of nature are the expression not of a unitary or monadic God, but of a *Triune*

(1) The "unity" of the Absolute is, from Hegel's point of view, by no means a correct expression. The Absolute is more appropriately called the Trinity, though even this term, as suggestive of mere number, is far from adequate.



God. It would be a great mistake to suppose that Hegel so constantly speaks of the Trinity in order to accommodate himself to Christianity. It is a well-known fact of his life that he, at the outset of his philosophic career, used to extol the Greek religion of beauty and to disparage Christianity. Later on, he, on speculative grounds, first came to the conclusion that it is the nature of the Absolute to be differentiated into selves which form an organic totality in which they cannot be isolated from one another, to become, in other words, a spirit and then began to appreciate what he, rightly or wrongly, regarded as the genuine kernel lying within the husks of orthodox Christianity. The ordinary representation of Hegel's thought that nature is the manifestation of a spiritual principle of unity, though approximately correct, is by no means exact. The spiritual principle of unity is not a barren identity, but a differentiated unity and nature is not the differentiations but the *real* side, the bodying forth of these differentiations. God, who as spirit is the union of His differentiations, His sons, freely lets Himself go into nature and through the ascending *stadia* of nature and the progressive civilisation and spiritualisation of man, the incarnation of the Son, returns to Himself in man's religious and philosophic knowledge of Him. As such, He is the Absolute Spirit. Such, in bare outline, is Hegel's thought.

"For the understanding", says Hegel, "God is the one, the essence of essences. This empty identity without difference is the false representation of God given by the understanding and by modern Theology. God is spirit, who gives itself an objective form and knows itself in that." (*Philosophy of Religion, English Translation, Volume III, P. 21.*) Real identity, concrete identity, is founded upon difference. "It is only the dead understanding that is self-identical." God is Spirit, the concrete universal, only as a totality of His determinations into which He resolves Himself and to which He imparts Himself without losing His own unity. "God", observes Hegel, "who represents Being-in-and-for-self eternally produces



Himself in the form of His son, distinguishes Himself from Himself, and is the absolute act of judgment and differentiation. What He thus distinguishes from Himself does not take on the form of something which is other than Himself; but, on the contrary, what is thus distinguished is nothing more or less than that from which it has been distinguished . . . . . In being in the other whom He has brought into definite existence, or posited, He is simply with Himself, has not gone outside of Himself. . . . . God is Himself just this entire act. He is the beginning, He does this definite thing but He is equally the end only, the totality, and it is as totality that God is spirit. (*Philosophy of Religion, English Translation, Volume III, P. 12*). Again, "God beholds Himself in what is differentiated; and when in His other He is united merely with Himself, He is there with no other but Himself, He is in close union only with Himself, He beholds *Himself*, in His other (*Ibid*, P. 18.) "God thought of simply as the Father", Hegel tells us, "is not yet the true". So conceived He is the "abstract God". It is only as the all-embracing totality, in which He is characterised as Himself that God is Spirit, the true Triune God. The passages which I have quoted and many others which might be quoted make it, I think, abundantly clear that, in Hegel's view, the differentiations of God are not mere objects, but are like Himself, subjects, selves. The object is the self in so far as it is real, limited and externalised. It is the other of self, its body. These selves, Hegel is careful to explain, do not exist in independence of God regarded as Father and in isolation from each other. They "are posited not as exclusive but as existing only in the mutual inclusion of the one by the other". God not only distinguishes Himself but "is at the same time the eternal abolition of the distinction. He posits Himself in the element of difference, but He also abolishes it as well." The unity of God is not prior to His differences. The differentiation which it undergoes "is not of an external kind, but must be defined as an inward differentiation

in such a way that the First or the Father is to be conceived of as the Last."

A different interpretation of Hegel's theory of the Trinity, in so far as it relates to the "Kingdom of the Father", is possible, but is not, I think, tenable. It is that God as Spirit is the unity of subject and object. As subject, He is the Father and as object, opposed to the subject, He is the Son. This appears to be the interpretation usually put upon his doctrine, but it is not adequate. There is this much of truth in it that God as the totality of the selves into which He is differentiated is also the unity that explains and transcends the distinction between subject and object. What God distinguishes from and opposes to Himself is, no doubt, the object or, more precisely, a universe of inter-related objects, but the object, Hegel maintains, is *Himself*. This cannot mean that the object which God distinguishes from Himself is Himself in the sense that it is not the other of Him as the Spirit that over-reaches the distinction between self and object. To the Spirit, nothing is *opposed* : it *reconciles* moments of it opposed to and distinguished from each other. By the expressions which he uses, Hegel, therefore, can only mean that the objects which God, as the *first* person in the Trinity, opposes to Himself are like him, selves. It must be remembered that Hegel calls the totality of objects which God distinguishes from Himself, the Son. Now if the object were *mere* object, such a characterisation of it would be, to say the least, extremely inappropriate. It would also entail the absurdity of saying that man, who is the incarnation of the Son, is the incarnation of the object. Of course, as I have already said, what is opposed to God as subject is the totality of objects, but the objects are also selves. The unity of the Divine self goes out to the plurality of finite objects, in each of which, as the ideality of it, it is realised. Its differentiation into objects, that is to say, is a corresponding differentiation into selves. The objects are exclusive of each other, but their selves exist only "in the mutual inclusion of the one by the other." It is

for this reason that Hegel says that what God distinguishes from Himself "does not take on the form of something which is other than Himself, but, on the contrary, what is thus distinguished is nothing more nor less than that from which it has been distinguished." This, at all events, seems to me to be the interpretation of his meaning which is more appropriate. In fine, God as Spirit is both the totality of selves and the unity that transcends the distinction between subject and object. What He is *not* is a solitary subject-object.

To sum up: The conclusion to which the Logic unmistakably points and which is decidedly confirmed by the *Philosophy of Religion* is that the Absolute is not a principle of unity differentiated into objects, but a self whose nature it is to surrender itself to its constituent selves, in each of which it is present, completely and indivisibly, and to bring them back into its own unity, the objective world being the otherness of this system of selves. Nature, to express the idea in another way, is related to a spiritual principle which is not a barren identity, but a concrete unity of persons.

In the Absolute as a totality of persons, what is the place of man? This is a question to which it is not easy to find an unambiguous answer in Hegel. "Man as Spirit", he says, "is a reflection of God" (*Philosophy of Religion, English Translation, Volume III, P. 46*). But what is the nature of this reflection? Is his existence essential to God? Does God need him as he needs God, or is he only a creature of the hour, an essentially ephemeral being, whose existence or non-existence makes no difference whatsoever to the fulness of His life? Various solutions have been given of the problem. It is very hard to find passages in Hegel's writings which unequivocally express his meaning, but, on the whole, I am inclined to think that he regards man's existence as essential to the self-realisation of the Absolute. In the return movement from nature to God, man, in Hegel's system, plays the part of the mediator. It is in him that nature comes to a consciousness of itself, and religion and



philosophy, and Hegel even suggests that his own philosophy, are the mediums through which God, incarnated as man, returns to Himself. The ideas of incarnation and atonement figure conspicuously in his system, he is almost obsessed with them and it is impossible not to take him seriously when he descants, upon these high themes. Man is the connecting link between nature and God; he is the incarnation of God, not of God the Father but of God the Son. This distinction is of very great importance. Man is the incarnation of the Son. That this should be Hegel's view is antecedently probable. The absolute, as we have seen, is differentiated into selves; it is the organic unity of these selves and there is no surplusage of it above and beyond them. If, therefore, man is the reproduction of God, he can only be the reproduction of one of his differentiations.

This view is, I think, supported by a number of passages in the *Philosophy of Religion*. The self-differentiations of God, are persons, but they exist *in* God as the elements of His being. "This act of differentiation is merely a movement, a playing of love with itself, in which it does not get to the otherness or other being in any serious sense, nor actually reach a condition of separation and division". (*Philosophy of Religion, English Translation, Volume III, P. 35*). "Eternal Being-in-and-for-itself is something which unfolds itself, determines itself, differentiates itself, posits itself as its own difference, but the difference, again, is at the same time eternally done away with and absorbed; what has essential Being, Being-in-and-for-itself eternally returns to itself in this, and only in so far as it does this is it spirit" (*Ibid, P. 35*). When, however, the element of difference acquires what Hegel calls the form of "Otherness which is possessed of Being", that is to say, when in one aspect of it, it is relatively detached from the whole to which it belongs, we have the Son incarnated as man. "What first appears in the Idea," says Hegel, "is merely the relation of Father and Son; but the other also comes to have the characteristic of other-being or otherness, of something which *is*" (*Ibid, P. 37*). The other is a self differentiation of



God, the Son of God as he is eternally *with* the Father, but the Other, which *also comes to have the characteristic of other-being or otherness* is man.

But apart from Hegel's own conclusion on the subject of the relation of man to the Absolute, it is, I think, possible to show on general speculative grounds and in accordance with his principles, that the essential nature of human personality is such that it could not have it unless it were a manifestation of a fundamental differentiation of the Absolute. A differentiation of the Absolute is an individual which contains in itself the content of the whole and yet excludes it. As a finite object, it excludes all other finite objects, but as the ideality of it, it is such that there is nothing which is not within it. This double function of the inclusion and exclusion of all, is the fundamental characteristic of the individual. What, as finite, is a real and excludes everything else is, as ideal, infinite and inclusive of everything. It is one and the same thing viewed from two different sides. Now the human self possesses exactly these characteristics and the legitimate inference therefore is, that it is a particular determination of the Absolute, with this difference that inasmuch as it does not reflect the whole actually but only potentially, it must be regarded as an incomplete reproduction of it. Knowledge implies that the object of knowledge is relative to the self that knows and yet is opposed to it. To imagine that the knowing mind is distinct from the thing that is known is the mistake of Realism, and to reduce the objects of knowledge to mere states of mind is the opposite mistake of subjective Idealism. If things were really external to the knowing mind, no miracle could ever bring them inside it and Kant, in his famous refutation of Idealism, has shown once and for all that knowledge presupposes the existence of objects as the correlative of the knowing mind. Human knowledge, besides conforming to this general condition of knowledge, possesses a characteristic which is not a necessary consequence of that condition. The things which we know are not only relative and *opposed* to our minds,

but are also in a manner, *independent* of them. This independence is due to, is, in fact, an aspect of, their externality to the body, while the knowledge of them is possible because the mind, which is the ideality of the body, is all-inclusive. Now this inclusion of all things in knowledge, and the exclusion of them as particular facts of existence, is what we have seen to be the essential nature of a self-differentiation of the Absolute, arising from the circumstance that it, as one among many differentiations, is finite and limited. The characteristics of the human self as subject of knowledge, we thus see, are identical with those of a fundamental differentiation of the Absolute (1). Its relation to the human body is analogous to the relation between the ideal and real aspects of Being-for-self, and any difference that exists is explicable by the fact that the body of man is the expression not of the fractional entity we call man, but of his true being, *viz*, a specific determination of the Absolute. There does not seem to be the same intimate connection between man's soul and his body, so much so that the latter has, to some extent, the character of being an other-being like anything else to the former, as there is between the infinite and the finite, the ideal and real, because the body is the objectivity not of the finite man but of his truer self, or, if you like the expression, his subliminal self(2).

(1) Dr. McTaggart has treated of this point, though in a slightly different way, at some length and I, therefore, do not dwell further on it.

(2) It is strange that no commentator of Hegel has thought fit to indicate what his theory of the relation between soul and body is. I claim that the view expressed in this essay is in agreement with Hegel's. In support of my contention, I rely on passages like the following, besides the whole trend of his teaching: "The notion and its existence are two sides, distinct yet united, like soul and body. The body is the same life as the soul, and yet the two can be named independently. A soul without a body would not be a living thing and *vice-versa*. The visible existence of the notion is its body" (quoted from the *Philosophy of Right* in E. S. Haldane's *Wisdom and Religion of a German Philosopher*, p. 135). "In so far as the "I" lives, the soul, which conceives, and, what is more, is free, is not separated from the body. The body is the outward embodiment of freedom and in it the "I" is sensible". (*Philosophy of Right*, Dyde's Translation, p. 54).

The body of man, as is well-known, is an organic unity. Ideally, therefore, it must be a system of selves, a self-differentiation of the Absolute which is itself a system of differentiations. There is nothing surprising in this. On the contrary, it is exactly what was to be expected. The parts of an organic whole are likely to be organic wholes themselves. If the universe be an organism which is organic in every part, it, subjectively, is a system of selves, each of which is itself a system of selves. Which objects of nature are organic wholes is a question on which speculative philosophy can have nothing to say. It must be settled by means of scientific observation. In strict deduction, therefore, from the principle which has been expounded in this essay and which, I am convinced, is the principle of Hegel, it follows that man's real self, the ideality of his body, is, like the Absolute whose differentiation it is, a society of selves, though, of course, it is a subordinate society. And is not this the nature of man himself, the fragmentary manifestation? Let empirical psychology answer this question. The day does not seem to be far distant, if it has not already arrived, when it will be definitely established that human personality is a colony rather than an abstract unity. No other hypothesis, it seems, would serve to explain various normal and abnormal phenomena of the mind. Leonie, Felida X, Sally Beauchamp and a host of others proclaim from the house tops that the self of man is not a simple unitary self, but a complex whole of component selves (1).

To conclude : The human self is a fragmentary manifestation of a differentiation of the Absolute, which is itself a system of differentiations, with the aspect of otherness strongly emphasised and in relative detachment from the totality of the Absolute life and consciousness, in which its transcendental self—the self-differentiation of the Absolute, has its being.

(1) This theory does not by any means destroy the unity of the human personality which consists not in its substantiality but in its *purposiveness*. It is too large a subject for me to introduce into this paper.



## CHAPTER II.

### DR. McTAGGART ON THE PERSONALITY OF THE ABSOLUTE.

Dr. McTaggart, to whom I have already referred several times, is, so far as I am aware, the only commentator of Hegel who clearly recognises that the Absolute is not a solitary self, but a unity of selves. He, however, is so carried away by the enthusiasm of his new discovery of Hegel's real meaning that he forgets altogether the unity of the Absolute, in the only sense in which that unity can have any meaning for us. He denies that the Absolute is a personality. It is a "unity of individuals, each of whom is perfectly individual through his perfect unity with all the rest", but it is not itself a person. And as personality is the essential attribute of God, it is better he concludes, "to express our result by saying that the Absolute is not God, and, in consequence, that there is no God." This, in all conscience, is a startling conclusion and we cannot help asking what are the arguments whose irresistible force drives one to it. I am bound to say that his reasoning, when closely examined, is found to be utterly inadequate to support a conclusion like this. Indeed, it seems to me, that it is an apt illustration of Mr. Bradley's epigram that "Metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct."

The personality of the Absolute as an all-embracing unity is clearly demanded by the paradoxical character of each constituent self of it, if it be taken as the ultimate form of personality. "If we ask", observes Dr. McTaggart, "what is contained in each individual differentiation, the answer is every thing. But if we ask what is contained in each differentiation in such a way as not to be also outside it, the answer is nothing. Now this is exactly the form that the paradox of the self would take, if we suppose a self whose knowledge and volition were perfect so that it knew and acquiesced in the whole of Reality."



(*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 26). And thus he thinks that the paradox of the self would be justified and it cannot, in his view, be justified in any other way. Dr. Mc Taggart rightly says that any attempt to solve the paradox by either denying that the self includes anything which is external to it, or denying that it excludes what it includes will simply not do. But his own solution is hardly a solution. Incredible as it seems, he contents himself with the assertion that the paradox of the self would be justified by the mere process of recognising that it *is* a paradox. His reason for thinking so is that "if we are to take the idea of self, not as a mere error, yet as less than absolute truth, we must find some justification of it which will show that the necessary course of thought leads up to it and also over it—that it is relatively true as transcending contradictions which would otherwise be unreconciled, but relatively as itself developing contradictions which must again be transcended. Can such a deduction be found? We cannot say with certainty that it never will be, but at any rate it does not seem to have been suggested yet" (*Ibid* p. 26) Now Dr. McTaggart deliberately deprives himself of the means of solving the contradiction involved in the idea of the finite self, in the manner which he himself suggests. Of course, the higher idea to which the finite self leads up, cannot be anything which transforms the essential characteristics of self beyond recognition, but it is to be found in the conception of the Absolute as a self differentiated into many selves. Dr. McTaggart does not deny the reality of an ultimate unity which embraces all particular selves within itself. On the contrary, he strongly insists upon it. The only question is whether it is a personal unity or not. Now each particular self, in so far as it contains everything, is identical with the Supreme Reality within which everything falls. Its consciousness as all-embracing must *coincide with* the Supreme Reality and the Supreme Reality, on its part, must, therefore, coincide with its consciousness and hence *be* consciousness. I do not see how it is possible to evade this conclusion. A particular differentiation of the Absolute, as a

finite determinate thing, excludes all others, but it includes everything not in its own strength, but in virtue of the identity of its all-embracing consciousness with the Ultimate Reality, which cannot, consequently, be other than consciousness. The conception of a particular self ideally including everything becomes tenable only on the supposition that the inclusion is also real, and if the ideal inclusion is conscious inclusion, so the real inclusion must also be.

Dr. McTaggart argues that "while the unity is for the individuals, the individuals are not for the unity," though they are *in* it. He devotes considerable space to the consideration of this point and evidently attaches much importance to it. His meaning is that as the *whole* of the unity must be *completely* in each individual and also be the bond which unites all the individuals, the problem arises, "How is it possible that the whole can be in each of its parts and yet be the whole of which they are parts." "The solution," he tells us, "can only be found by the introduction of a new and higher idea. The conception which, according to Hegel, will overcome the difficulties of the categories of Life, is that of a unity which is not only *in* the individuals, but also *for* the individuals. There is only one example of such a category known to us in experience, and that is a system of conscious individuals" (*Ibid*, p. 13). "The whole point of saying that the unity is *for* an individual," he further explains, "is that it exists both out of him and in him." The individuals do not certainly exist *for* the unity, in the sense in which Dr. McTaggart uses the word, because it is not itself an individual, but such a mode of existence is surely a *defect* due to the finitude of the individual and cannot be regarded as the test of the personality of the Absolute. The externality to the individual which the existence of the whole of Reality *for* it implies, and which nevertheless is *in* it, is prevented from being a down-right contradiction and sheer nonsense, by the fact that the self-consciousness of the individual is identical with the unity of the Absolute within which all reality falls. Dr.

McTaggart's objection turns on the unwarrantable assumption that as the individuals do not exist *for* the unity, it cannot be a self-conscious unity. A relation of this kind is not the *condition* of self-consciousness, but the consequence of the incompleteness and one-sidedness of it. The truth underlying Dr. McTaggart's contention of course is that consciousness implies distinction and opposition. A's consciousness of B, C, D implies the opposition of B, C, D to A. But the inclusion of all individuals in the Absolute does not mean the cancellation of difference and opposition. The Absolute, in so far as it is a particular individual, excludes others, but the other aspect of this reciprocal exclusion is that they are gathered up, focussed in the unity of the Absolute, without the difference and opposition disappearing.

No one is more emphatic than Dr. McTaggart in declaring that the unity of the Absolute is not less real than its differentiations. To him it is not an abstraction or only another name for a mere aggregate. It is a real unity, an harmonious and coherent whole. All finite selves which are its differentiations are included in it. It is not above and beyond these differentiations but in and through them. The relation of each finite self to the Absolute is organic. The whole is in each part and is equal to the part. Now if the whole, in so far as it is in the part, is personal and can say "I am," how can the whole itself be impersonal? Once touched with self-consciousness at a particular point, where, be it remembered, it is completely present, how can it ever shake it off? The part is not a fraction of the whole, and it is impossible to argue that though one part of the Absolute is self-conscious, it, as a whole, may not be so. The part *is* the whole and if it is self-conscious, so must the whole be. If my eyes see a thing, I see it; if my ears hear a sound, I hear it; so if the Absolute is a person in me, it must itself have personality. To think otherwise is not to be serious with the doctrine that "the whole of the unity shall be in each individual." The differentiations of the Absolute are admittedly persons. If so, it



is inconceivable that their unity, the Absolute, should not be a person. The unity may be more but cannot certainly be less than a person.

The Absolute, as Dr. McTaggart conceives it, is a society of perfect but finite individuals and, as such, is a spiritual unity. Each individual, as perfect, includes and, as finite, excludes all the rest. P, Q, R, let us suppose, are the individuals, whose unity is M, the Absolute. Now M as P consciously includes Q and R, M as Q includes P and R and so on. Between the inclusion of Q and R in the consciousness of M as P and that of P and R in the consciousness of M as Q, there can be no breach of continuity. This continuity, however, which must necessarily be a fact of consciousness is not in the consciousness either of P or of Q or of R. P does not itself carry forward the items of its consciousness to Q, nor Q to R. This is the function which belongs to M. The only fact present in the consciousness of P is that it includes Q and R and so with each of the rest. The *inference* that there is such a continuity must not be confounded with the *fact* of it. Now it is this continuity which, as I have said, must be a conscious fact that is realised in M. The facts in the separate consciousnesses of P, Q and R get re-interpreted in the light of their continuity, and so re-interpreted constitute M. This simple and unavoidable reasoning does, I think, establish beyond dispute that the Absolute is a conscious unity. The only alternative is to deny that it is a unity at all and so to be driven to monadism.

"If the Absolute," argues Dr. McTaggart, "is to be called a person, because it is a spiritual unity, then every college, every goose-club, every gang of thieves, must also be called a person. For they are all spiritual unities. They all consist exclusively of human beings, and they all unite all their members in some sort of unity. Their unities are indeed much less perfect than the unity of the Absolute. But if an imperfect unity is not to be called an imperfect person, then the name of person must be denied to ourselves as manifested



here and now..... Now we call ourselves persons, but no one, I believe, has ever proposed to call a foot-ball team a person. But if we call the Absolute a person, we should have no defence for refusing the name to the foot-ball team" (*Ibid*, p. 86). The analogy between a college or a foot-ball team and the Absolute is by no means self-evident. Subordinate unities like the college or the foot-ball team exist for temporary and particular purposes and can be formed or dissolved without the least advantage or detriment to the essential nature of their members, but all such subordinate unities presuppose and are grounded on the unity of the Absolute, apart from which nothing can even exist. A foot-ball team is a union of its members in so far as they are sportsmen and has no bearing on their life in other respects. So a college is a combination for purposes which cannot be realised without it and the members of it, considered as interested and concerned in the execution of these purposes, have no being apart from it, but as individuals with other capacities and functions they have no relation to it. The relation, however, of the Absolute to its constituent individuals is different. It is a union which makes not this or that phase of their existence but the whole of their existence, including their existence *as inter-conscious members of it* possible. It is the pre-condition of and is realised in the inter-consciousness of the individuals it unites, and is *ipso facto* a conscious unity. If any analogy between such widely disparate entities is at all to be drawn, it is, I venture to think, least misleading to express it in this way. The unity of the foot-ball team is no other than the community of purposes of the sportsmen. The unity of the college consists in the common academic interests of its members. So the unity of the Absolute is, besides other things, the continuity of consciousness involved in the inter-consciousness of the selves that constitute it.

Dr. McTaggart justly contends that the consciousness of the non-ego is an essential condition of the personality of a finite person. "Such a consciousness the

Absolute cannot possess. For there is nothing outside it, from which it can distinguish itself.....The Absolute has not a characteristic which is admitted to be essential to all finite personality, which is all the personality of which we have any experience. Is this characteristic essential to personality or only to finite personality? We know of no personality without a non-ego. Nor can we imagine what such a personality would be like. For *we* certainly can never say "I" without raising the idea of the non-ego, and so we can never form any idea of the way in which the Absolute would say "I" (*Ibid*, pp. 68-69). The essential condition of self-consciousness is the *opposition* and not the *externality* of the non-ego to the ego. The non-ego is external to the body and thus comes to have the appearance of externality to the finite mind, because the finite mind is the ideality of the body. Dr. McTaggart fails to distinguish an accidental circumstance of our self-consciousness from the essential condition of it. The Absolute, of course, has nothing *outside* it from which it can distinguish itself, but from this it does not follow that *within* it there is no non-ego in distinction from which it has the consciousness of self. For, in relation to every finite differentiation of the Absolute, the other differentiations are non-egos. These differentiations, therefore, are by turns egos and non-egos. In the Absolute, all its differences are united but not lost. They retain their fundamental characteristics. The Absolute which says "I" in each of its determinations, has self-consciousness in so far as these egos are brought together in its unity. *Their* self-consciousness is *its* self-consciousness. On the other hand, the differences, in so far as they are non-egos, do not cease to be so by their coming together in it. In the unity of the Absolute, therefore, the double character which belongs to its differentiations is preserved. To say that the element of the non-ego is absent from it, is to say that an essential feature of its component factors is somehow lost in it. But this is impossible if the Absolute is "the differentiated unity or the unified differentiations." The Abso-

lute is self-conscious *in* and as the totality of the selves which compose it, and the non-ego which it is not without in them is not lost to it. It, in fine, is the unity which transcends but does not annul the relative distinction between ego and non-ego set up in the process of differentiation which it undergoes, in order to exist as the deepest and most comprehensive unity.

Dr. McTaggart takes it for granted that "personality cannot be the attribute of a unity which has no indivisible centre of reference and which is from all points of view all in every part." His thought, it seems to me, is coloured throughout by his view that the self is a *substance*. "In the identity of the substance," we are told, "lies the personal identity." Dr. McTaggart admits that "this is a rather unfashionable mode of expression." "Unfashionable mode of thought," he might have said. It certainly is not the thought of Hegel, who repeatedly insists on the difference between a substance and a subject. It is substantially a revival of the pre-Kantian dogmatic theory of the soul, however much it may be modified by the reflection that "each self can only exist in virtue of its connection with all the others and with the Absolute which is their unity." A differentiation of the Absolute is no doubt a substance, but it is much more. On Hegel's principles, it, as a moment of the Absolute Idea, shares in the nature of the Absolute Idea and the Absolute Idea as the ultimate category is immeasurably richer than substance. Instead of saying that personal identity lies in the identity of substance, we should rather invert the proposition and say that the identity of substance lies in its being the objective expression of the identity of self. The unity of the self is, no doubt, realised in each "unity of centre", but is by no means confined to it. The fact that it is realised in an individual centre, as a particular, is made possible by its going beyond it to other individuals which are thus gathered up into the synthetic unity of the Absolute and thereby reduced to a systematic totality. This is the im-



portant lesson that we learn from Hegel's doctrine of the Notion. The Absolute is, as Dr. McTaggart says, the "unity of system," but a unity of system which is not the expression of a unity of self-consciousness is only a mechanical aggregate, or, at best, what Hegel calls Absolute mechanism. Dr. McTaggart speaks as if the conception of an individual including in its knowledge the whole of Reality, which, at the same time, it excludes, is, in itself, a satisfying conception. It is nothing of the kind. It is in reality a contradictory conception, pointing to the solution of it in the inclusion of the individuals in a wider unity, where it and other selves like it come together and are commingled without loss of their individuality. The *one-sidedness* of the being and consciousness of the individual, to which the exclusion of the rest is due, presupposes a *many-sided* and all-embracing consciousness in which each individual gets its proper place in relation to others.

This leads us to the consideration of the question whether the self can be conceived as the totality of selves. "Can we attach," asks Dr. McTaggart, "any meaning to the statement that one self-conscious being should consist of a multiplicity of self-conscious beings in such a way that it had no reality apart from them? Or that one self-conscious being should be part of another in such a way that it had no reality apart from it?" This question must emphatically be answered in the affirmative. Our own self is, within its limits, of such a nature. It is nothing if not a totality. The true nature of the self is hidden from us by the manner in which the distinction between the self and its states is usually drawn. Each mental state is not merely a state *of* the self, but *is* the self in that state. It is because this is so that the states of consciousness are not accidentally associated with, but are intrinsically related to, one another. "All self-consciousness," as Professor Stout says, "implies a division of the total self. When I think about myself, the I and the myself are never quite identical. The self of which I have an idea is always distinguished from the self which has the idea" (*Manual*



of *Psychology*, p. 545). The conscious states are not related to the self as the modes of Spinoza are related to the substance. The self is split up into its states in each of which the whole of it is present. When Hume said that he was unable to get at the pure self, but always stumbled upon some particular state of the self, he said no more than the truth, only that he failed to realise that the particular mental state is itself the self so expressed. Had he discerned this the problem of the relatedness of impressions would have been solved for him. Fortunately this is a conclusion which does not rest on mere speculative grounds. Empirical facts establish it beyond all reasonable doubt. The phenomenon which abnormal cases of the disintegration of personality present, is explicable only on the hypothesis that the normal self consists in the integration of selves. To say so is not to imply that the self is a mere aggregate. It is a totality, no doubt, but a totality whose ground lies in its purposiveness. Its unity is not to be sought for in its substantiality, but in the abiding aim or purpose which holds together the units of it, (1). Such an abiding purpose is not a *single* purpose but a system of purposes in and through which the ultimate meaning of life is progressively realised. The self is one, as far as and no further than, a common purpose runs through it. When the last vestige of a common purpose is gone, the last preparation for the mad house is completed.

If we are to say that the unity of the Absolute is not a personal unity, what alternative has Dr. McTaggart to offer? How is that unity to be conceived? It will scarcely do to say that it is the unity of unconscious Reason. Dr. McTaggart is hardly likely to resuscitate a theory once fashionable, but now decently buried. Unconscious Reason is as much a chimera as unconscious matter unrelated to intelligence. If the Absolute is not a person, if it is not unconscious Reason, the only alternative that remains is to conceive of it as realised

(1). Professor Josiah Royce has exhaustively treated of the relation of purposiveness to personality in his *Conception of God* and Gifford lectures.

in the self-consciousness of each individual and the unity of it becomes a mere name. It is only the self-consciousness of P+the self-consciousness of Q+the self-consciousness of R and so on. Of what avail is it to reiterate, as Dr. McTaggart does, that the unity of the Absolute is as real as its differences, that it is an organic unity and so forth, when all conception of it is rendered impossible by the assertion that consciousness does not belong to it? Of course, it is not personal as man is personal. Probably it is better to call it, as Mr. Bradley suggests, super-personal; but to regard it as spiritual minus consciousness is, I maintain, impossible. That the denial of self-consciousness to the Absolute must inevitably lead to pluralism is evidenced by Dr. McTaggart's comparison of it to such things as a foot-ball team or a gang of thieves. Of course, these are mere illustrations, though perhaps, not particularly happy ones; but does not a straw show which way the wind blows? I suspect that in spite of his stout disclaimers, pluralism silently dominates the thought of Dr. McTaggart more than he himself realises. Between pluralism and the doctrine that the Absolute is a self-conscious unity, there is really no choice.

Dr. McTaggart asserts, though with some hesitation, that "Hegel does not himself regard the Absolute as personal." "It seems clear," he argues. "from the *Philosophy of Religion* that the truth of God's nature, according to Hegel, is to be found in the kingdom of the Holy Ghost and the kingdom of the Holy Ghost appears to be not a person but a community." (*Studies in Hegelian Cosmology*, p. 59.) Again, "if God is really personal, He must be personal in the kingdom of the Spirit, for that is the synthesis and in that alone do we get an adequate representation of God's nature" (*Ibid*, p. 208). I have already stated what, in my judgment, Hegel's view on this subject is and need not dwell on it at any length here. Suffice it to say, that if the kingdom of the Father taken by itself and in isolation from the kingdom of the Son and the kingdom of the Spirit is an abstraction, the kingdom of the Spirit apart from the kingdom of the Father, is equally so. The

validity of Dr. McTaggart's argument depends upon the assumption that the kingdom of the Father is merged in the kingdom of the Holy Ghost. But, most assuredly, this is not Hegel's meaning. Hegel, who tells us that nature—and to this, be it remembered, the kingdom of the Son corresponds—"is the extreme self-alienation of Spirit, in which it yet remains one with itself" and that "the idea freely lets itself go out of itself, while yet resting in itself, and remaining absolutely secure of itself," cannot possibly teach that in the return to Himself which the stage of the kingdom of the Spirit represents, He ceases to be what He is even in the second kingdom of "extreme self-alienation of Spirit." The Church as a spiritual community is not a person, but has for its presupposition the Personality of God the Father who on His part, "is not God", as Hegel tells us, "without the world" and the community of His incarnate Sons, *viz.*, the Church. In the kingdom of the Spirit, God, who "in the extreme self-alienation of Spirit," (nature) "remains absolutely secure" of Himself, returns to Himself, through man's consciousness of Him. "If God were personal," says Dr. McTaggart, "as manifested in the first and second kingdoms, but not in the third, it would mean that He was personal, when viewed inadequately but not when viewed adequately" (*Ibid*, p. 208). But why should He *not* be Personal when viewed adequately? The truth is that Dr. McTaggart conceives of the kingdom of the Spirit as a mere brotherhood of finite Spirits, but in reality and, as I believe, in Hegel's view, it is the brotherhood of finite spirits grounded on the Fatherhood of God or the Fatherhood of God realised in the brotherhood of His children. And this is the view which is in harmony with the substance of Christianity, the defence of which by Hegel is not half-hearted, but whole-hearted and sincere.



## CHAPTER III.

### THE ABSOLUTE AND HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

We now come to the second subject of our inquiry, *viz.*, the relation of the categories to the Absolute and to human knowledge. It is hardly appropriate to speak of the *relation* of the categories to the Absolute. The categories, according to Hegel, are to be looked upon "as definitions of the Absolute, or metaphysical definitions of God" or the expression of "God's nature in thoughts as such." The dialectic does not describe the movement of mere human thought, but unfolds the content of the Absolute Mind. This is unquestionably Hegel's view. Logic is Absolute knowledge. In other words, it is the Absolute Mind's consciousness of itself as it really is. It is the self-consciousness of God. No doubt, the philosopher, who traces out the inter-connections of the categories, is a human being, but in Absolute knowledge he rises to the standpoint of the Absolute and transcends the limitations of his nature. "The object of religion, as of philosophy is the eternal truth in its very objectivity,—God and nothing but God—and the explication of God." Philosophic knowledge is God's knowledge of Himself through man's knowledge of Him. In so far as man has true philosophic knowledge of God, he is one with God. To be cognisant of the dialectical evolution of the categories is, therefore, to feel the very pulse-beats of the Absolute. "Philosophy", Hegel tells us, "has to consider its object in its necessity, not, indeed, in its subjective necessity or external arrangement, classification etc., but it has to unfold and demonstrate the object out of the necessity of its own inner nature." It exhibits in systematic completeness the elements of the inmost life of the Absolute.

All this may sound strange to ordinary common sense and may seem to be little better than the meaningless utterances



of a philosophy gone mad. Yet a little reflection will show that these paradoxical statements contain nothing but the sober truth. "I think Thy thoughts after Thee, O God!" exclaimed Kepler, and no body ever dreams of accusing him of blasphemy and over-weening conceit. On the contrary, it is taken as an indication of Kepler's great piety. Hegel says exactly the same thing in the technical language of philosophy. The only difference between him and others like Kepler is that the truth which flashes upon their minds only on rare occasions is the permanent basis of his thought which is never off his mind. The agreement of thought with Reality is the tacit presupposition on which both science and philosophy proceed. If there were a chasm between our thought and Reality, how could we by means of thinking become aware of even the most insignificant truths about things? To interpose a barrier between human thought and Reality is to make all knowledge impossible, even the knowledge that there is a Reality. Indeed the very problem as to the relation between Thought and Reality can arise only if the distinction between the two has somehow been overcome. In so far as man's thought lays hold of Reality, it is not a mere subjective process, but coincides with the inmost essence of things. The great error of Hegel, no doubt, is that he supposes that man's philosophical knowledge of Reality coincides with the whole content of Reality, but this should not make us blind to the element of truth of what he teaches. Philosophical knowledge is the knowledge of truth so far as it goes, and knowledge of truth is the thinking of God's thought after God, or what Hegel calls the explication of the Absolute.

Green has given a different account of the method of Hegel. If, he says, Thought is to be identified with Reality, it "cannot be the process of philosophising, though Hegel himself, by what seems to us the one essential aberration of his doctrine, treats this process as a sort of movement of the Absolute Thought" (*Works*, Vol. III, p. 143). Hegel's fault, we are told, is that for an answer to the question, What is

Thought, the questioner "instead of being duly directed to an investigation of the objective world, and the source of the relations which determine its content, is rather put on the track of an introspective inquiry what and how he can or cannot conceive." (*Ibid*, p. 143). The world, Green tells us, will not accept the Hegelian view of the relation between God and the world "until it is made clear that the nature of that thought, which Hegel declares to be the reality of things, is to be ascertained, if at all, from analysis of the objective world, not from reflection on the processes of our intelligence which really presuppose that world.....Language which seems to imply the identification of our discursive understanding with God, or with the world in its spiritual reality can lead to nothing but confusion." (*Works*, Vol. III, pp. 144-45). Green sums up his criticism of Hegel by declaring that he suspects that "all along Hegel's method has stood in the way of an acceptance of his conclusion, because, he, at any rate, seemed to arrive at his conclusion as to the spirituality of the world, not by interrogating the world, but by interrogating his own thoughts." The fundamental conclusion of Hegel, however, that "all that is real is the activity or expression of one spiritual self-conscious being," Green heartily accepts, but he states that whoever would present this conclusion in "a form which will command some general acceptance among serious and scientific men, though he cannot drink too deep of Hegel should rather sit loose to the dialectical method" (*Ibid* p. 146).

Now this decidedly unfavourable judgment of the dialectical method is, as Dr. Caird rightly says, "not valid against Hegel." The point of it is the assumption that the Hegelian doctrine of the identity of Thought and Being means that there is not even a relative difference between them and that Reality is the same as the psychological process of thinking. This is, of course, far from Hegel's meaning. The process of thinking, as Green says, presupposes the world, but the dependence is not one-sided. The world

equally presupposes the process of thinking and the unity of the two does not mean their simple sameness, but the higher synthesis of them in which their relative opposition to each other is at once preserved and annulled. The opposition between the subjective process of thinking and the objective reality of the world, in the manner in which Green states that opposition, is really irrelevant from Hegel's point of view. Hegel deals with Reality as a whole and the distinctions between the various phases of that Reality, including the distinction between subject and object, fall within its unity. The business of philosophy is to explain the precise meaning of these distinctions and to show their proper places in the systematic unity of the whole. This is the great task which the dialectical method seeks to accomplish and to sit loose to it is to give up philosophy altogether in despair. An inquiry into the nature of Reality is in one sense "reflection on the processes of our intelligence," in another, it is not. All Reality is relative to intelligence and is the manifestation of it. The distinction between subject and object is created and overcome by intelligence. The various phases of Reality are, therefore, at the same time modes of intelligence, and as our intelligence is an integral part of the Absolute, an investigation of the objective world is also a study of the forms of intelligence, which are as much forms of the Absolute Thought as of our intelligence. But if any one supposes that an introspective examination of the contents of his particular consciousness will reveal to him the nature of Reality, he is, no doubt, open to the censure of Green. Hegel, however, has not in any way made himself amenable to the censure. In his system, if Thought is identified with Being, it is also opposed to it. Thought, as the subject of knowledge, is the correlative of, and, therefore, opposed to the object of knowledge. But this correlativity and opposition implies a unity which transcends the opposition. The ultimate unity within which the distinction of subject and object falls is Thought, as is the subject to which the object is correlative. It is with Thought as the ultimate unity—the



Absolute, that Hegel identifies Reality and not with it as the mere subject of knowledge. Green, I think, overlooks this important distinction.

What, after all, is the dialectical method which is so obnoxious to Green? It is not, as he seems to think, a means of determining what and how a man can or cannot conceive, but the method which seeks to show that a partial and inadequate conception of Reality is inherently contradictory and therefore, leads on to a fuller and more adequate conception, which, in turn, is found to be equally onesided and defective, till we reach the conception of a systematic totality of things in which a single spiritual principle is manifested, or what Hegel calls, the Absolute Idea. (1) The final conclusion of a philosophical system does not rest on the mere *ipse dixit* of the philosopher. Its justification lies in the fact that from the standpoint of the philosopher no other conception is found to be equally adequate and satisfactory. The truth is that every philosophy must employ the dialectical method consciously or unconsciously. The only question is whether it is to be employed thoroughly and systematically or in a perfunctory and external manner. Green's own method of developing his theory is, in effect, the dialectical method. An object, he shows, taken by itself and held in isolation is a self-contradictory thing. Its apparent being is in reality non-being. This contradiction latent in the unscientific view that objects are self-subsistent entities is overcome when we realise that to be is to stand in relations. A thing has reality only in so far as it is related to other things. The world, therefore, is not a mere assemblage of things, but a unity based on the connectedness of things. Relativity, again, reveals a fresh contradiction, unless it is remembered that the objects related to one another can become one, without ceasing to be many, only if we suppose them to be co-present to, and expressions of, a unifying consciousness. Apart from such

(1). This brief description of the Absolute Idea must be understood in the light of what I have said on this subject above.



a unifying consciousness, the idea of the relatedness of objects leads us to the flagrant contradiction that objects, as related to one another, are one, and yet they are not one, because, unless they are many they cannot become related to one another. An argument of this kind is essentially Hegelian and the method of it is in effect, the much decried dialectical method. The great merit of Hegel is that he is not content with examining only a few conceptions picked up at random, but undergoes a truly Herculean labour in bringing to light the fundamental categories of thought and in showing them to be different phases of the life of the Absolute. He turns to man's theoretic and practical life, to language and science, to art and religion and by an exhaustive survey of them, such as no man has ever undertaken, discovers their ground-conceptions and shows that each of them represents a phase of the Absolute, valid in its own proper sphere, but, taken as complete and self-sufficing, self-contradictory, and necessitating a forward movement till we find that nothing less than the Absolute itself can afford us a final and secure resting ground.

But when all this is said, all difficulties are not obviated and all doubts are not finally set at rest. The student of Hegel is forced to recognise that philosophy, if it is to be of any worth, must be an explication of Reality as a whole. To admit this is to admit that man, in so far as he possesses philosophical knowledge, is a participator in the Thought of the Absolute. But, nevertheless, it is impossible not to find a certain unsatisfactoriness in a doctrine which seems to remove all distinction between frail and finite man and the Absolute. This feeling is well-expressed by Green when he says that "when we have satisfied ourselves that the world in its truth or full reality is spiritual, because on no other supposition is its unity explicable, we may still have to confess that a knowledge of it in its spiritual reality—such a knowledge of it as would be a knowledge of God is impossible to us. To know God, we must be God. The unifying principle of the

world is indeed in us ; it is our self. But, as in us, it is so conditioned by a particular animal nature that, while it yields the idea of the world as one which regulates all our knowledge, our actual knowledge is a piecemeal process. We spell out the relations of things one by one, we pass from condition to condition, from effect to effect ; but, as one fragment of truth is grasped another has escaped us and we never reach that totality of apprehension through which alone, we could know the world as it is and God in it" (*Works, Vol III, p. 145*). In preaching the truth that man's knowledge of Reality is knowledge of the Absolute, Hegel is apt to forget that the whole content of Absolute knowledge is not revealed to him. Between the proposition that the categories of human knowledge are not merely subjective, but integral elements of Absolute Reality, and the proposition that man's knowledge of the Absolute is co-extensive with the Absolute, there is no necessary connection whatsoever. The cardinal error of Hegel the "one essential aberration of his doctrine," to use the language of Green, is that he passes from the first proposition, which is tenable, to the second proposition, which is untenable and absurd, without warrant or justification. It is ridiculous to imagine that the 60 or 70 categories of Hegel's Logic exhaust the wealth of Divine knowledge. This wholly gratuitous and presumptuous limitation imposed on the possibilities of Divine knowledge and not his method, as Green supposes, that has really stood in the way of an acceptance of his conclusions. In the fundamental principles of Hegel, there is nothing which makes such a conclusion necessary. On the contrary, there is a great deal to show that although the logical categories are aspects of Reality, they are only a fraction of it which comes within the purview of human knowledge. The notion that to follow the movement of the categories from Pure Being to the Absolute Idea is to take a full measure of the Absolute is, in fact, only a peculiar whim of Hegel's. Everywhere he is inclined to claim finality. The Absolute Thought is analysable exactly into the categories treated

of in the Logic, neither more nor less ; Nature is rational—only in so far as it is the other of the logical categories, the extra element that refuses to fit into the categories is only the play of chance ; the quintessence of political wisdom is embodied in the Prussian constitution as it was about the year 1826 ; God reveals Himself in History only on the shores of the Meditteranean and returns to Himself only in the philosophy of Hegel, which, of course, contains the last word of philosophy. All this is perhaps excusable in Hegel himself, for, the greatest philosopher of the world though he is, he is only a man and has his prejudices and bias from which no man is free. But there is no reason why his followers should be tied down to the letter of his system. To deny that the categories of Logic are a complete explication of the Absolute is not to set up a barrier between our knowledge and Reality. They, so far as they go, *do* reveal the Absolute, but there is more in the Absolute than is dreamt of in Hegel's Logic. What we know, we truly know, but we do not know all.

The categories of Hegel bear marks which unmistakably indicate that they do not constitute the whole of Reality. If they exhausted the content of the Absolute Life, why should the task of tracing out their inter-connections be so puzzling and difficult of achievement ? We should see at a glance the mutual relations of the categories, if we had all of them before us and there ought to be no uncertainty and hesitation in determining the exact place of each of them in relation to the rest. What is once found to be true would not be liable to subsequent revision and modification. There is no room for tentative procedure in Absolute cognition. Having the whole of Reality and all its constituent elements before him, nothing would be easier for the philosopher than to comprehend how exactly the whole is expressed in the parts and in what precise manner the parts are related to one another. And the experience of the student of Hegel's philosophy would be equally delightful. Scanning the pages of the Logic, he



would find the whole panorama of Reality unrolled before his eyes and the comprehension of it a process unerring, immediate and facile. The actual fact, however, is very different from all this. It is well-known that Hegel did not by any means find the task of linking up the categories an easy one. He speaks of the "labour of the notion" and the hesitancy of his procedure is evidenced by the modifications in the arrangement of the categories which he made in the several editions of the *Greater Logic* and the *Encyclopædia*. Is it not strange that there should be so much uncertainty as to the exact relations of the categories to one another, when Hegel professes to know *all* of them as organic elements of the Absolute? The logical implication of the claim to a complete knowledge of the Absolute is omniscience and if there is no omniscience, it follows that the only knowledge of the Absolute possible to man is piecemeal and sketchy and not detailed and complete.

It is sometimes supposed that the dialectical evolution of the categories is independent of experience. If only the philosophic gaze is fixed steadfastly on Pure Being a movement will set in which will ultimately carry the philosopher to the crowning summit of the Absolute Idea. The dialectic, it is imagined, not only interprets but also generates the categories and for the discovery of them no reference to empirical facts is necessary. Pure Being, by an inner necessity, by its own immanent energy, passes into the next category and this into the next and so on and so on, till in an automatic manner the process is completed when the final category of the Absolute Idea is reached. All this, however, is only a fancy-picture of Hegel's method and is very far from the actual truth. What Hegel really does is that he gathers, mainly from science and language, the root-conceptions which underlie experience and constitute experience and which, therefore, we employ in order to interpret experience and shows how they belong to, are members of, one all-inclusive Reality. Such a procedure, it is needless to explain, depends from beginning to end on experience. Its presupposition is experience and

its goal is experience; presupposition, because the categories are derived from it, goal, because the highest effort of philosophy is directed towards the demonstration of it as the systematic unity and embodiment of the categories. Philosophy, therefore, can begin its work only when the sciences have, partially at least, completed theirs. It must wait for a prior interpretation of experience by science. Each science brings to light the fundamental principles or the categories which rule the phenomena with which it deals. Philosophy takes up these categories themselves for investigation. It examines them with a view to determine their scope and limitations and the manner in which the lower or more abstract ones lead up to, become merged into, the higher. Depending for its materials on the sciences it must from time to time revise and correct itself, as the sciences make progress in their interpretation of the world. It must follow in the wake of the sciences and cannot anticipate their results. Any claim, therefore, of the finality of philosophy is bound to be futile. If Hegel could come to life again and re-write the *Logic* to-day, it is certain that he would write it very differently. The old sciences have made enormous progress and profoundly modified many of their conclusions and new ones have come into existence since his time. Any scheme of the mutual filiation of the categories drawn up to-day would be so materially different from Hegel's *Logic* that very little similarity could be traced between the two. The science of Biology alone, which had no existence in Hegel's time, would furnish so many new categories that, viewed in their light, some at least of the categories of Hegel's *Logic* would necessarily present a very different appearance. These considerations are enough to show that it is absurd to imagine that Hegel's categories are a complete and final explication of the Absolute. Such a supposition would imply the finality of the scientific knowledge which the world had in the first quarter of the last century. "We have no claim," as Professor Baillie says, "to regard Hegel's *Logic* as finished and unalterable body of truth, the validity of which as a whole stands or falls with

the validity of each part of it." "No stress," he rightly observes, "can be laid on the seeming finality which is characteristic of the system." (*Origin and Significance of Hegel's Logic*, p. 255).

That there are large gaps between the categories in spite of their apparently seamless continuity with each other becomes evident if we glance at some of them. What these missing links are, we cannot even conjecture, but that they do exist, is, I think, undoubted. Take the category of quantity, for example, and the puzzle of the endlessness of space and the infinite divisibility of matter. Hegel's solution of these Kantian antinomies of Cosmology is that they arise from our failure to take together the two moments of quantity, continuity and discreteness, and allowing them to alternate with each other. The difficulty about the endlessness of space troubles us when we forget that quantity is not only continuous but also discrete, and the idea of the limitedness of the world in space becomes an embarrassment when we abstract from continuity. An object, in so far as its quantitative aspect is concerned, is the synthesis of continuity and discreteness. Now this answer is no doubt valid, so far as it goes, but it does not ultimately obviate the difficulties involved in the antinomies of Kant. Continuity and discreteness are abstractions apart from each other and are true only as mutually related aspects of quantity. To show this, however, is not to perfectly harmonise these opposed moments of quantity with each other. What Hegel proves is that continuity *implies* discreteness and not that it *become* or *turns over* into discreteness and *vice-versa*. The point will become clear if we compare the triad of continuity, discreteness and quantum with the triad Being, nothing and Becoming. Being, carefully scrutinised, turns out to *be* Nothing and Nothing *is* Being. Of course the identity is not mere sameness, but with all their difference, Being *is* Nothing and Nothing *is* Being and the process of the one *passing over* into the other is Becoming. Becoming is thus a real reconciliation of Being and Nothing. The reason of this,



no doubt, is that Being and Nothing being the poorest and most abstract categories are, for that very reason, nearest each other. But continuity does not *become* discreteness, nor, discreteness, continuity. The one *presupposes* the other and quantum is their reconciliation only in this sense that the concept of it is analysable into the concepts of continuity and discreteness. Continuity is an element of quantity and cannot be torn off from it. Its correlative, eternal partner, is discreteness, but *on its own ground*, as distinct, though not separate from discreteness, it gives rise to the puzzle of the endlessness of space. Similarly, in another direction, continuity, as opposed to discreteness, leads to the difficulty of the infinite divisibility of matter. To point to the correlativity of these two categories is not to solve the problem which each from its own point of view raises. To move on to the higher categories is, no doubt, to avoid but not necessarily to conquer the difficulties connected with the lower ones. Had continuity and discreteness passed over into each other, while retaining their difference, like Being and Nothing, the defects of the one might have been supplied by the other, but this is not what happens. The problems arising from continuity and discreteness, in so far as they are distinct from each other, remain unsolved in spite of their correlativity. The truth is that Hegel does not overcome the antinomies of Kant, but only shows that the failure of the two opposed moments of quantity to come into perfect harmony with each other does not in any way discredit Reality, for Reality is vastly more than mere quantity. Nevertheless, the antinomies arising from quantity remain unsolved and suggest that though the solution is beyond our comprehension, there must be supplementary categories in the Absolute consciousness of such a nature that in the light of them the mysteries of quantity are fully explained.

The false infinite of quality is another illustration of a *lacuna* in the Hegelian scheme of categories. The difficulty about quantity considered above, is, in fact, only a recurrence on a higher plane of that connected with qualitatively infinite

progression. A somewhat passes over into another, this into somewhat else and so on *ad infinitum*. The *truth* of this infinite series, as we have seen, is the genuine Infinite, which comprehends the infinite series within itself. Reality is more than an infinite series. But this insight does not help us in summing up the infinite series itself. The difficulty inherent in it is not solved by our advancing to a more adequate category. But in the Absolute, the series must somehow be summed up. In other words, the Absolute must have a form of cognition which enables it to comprehend the series *as a whole*, but, we, lacking in it, are burdened with the difficulty without the means of solving it.

The idea of Time conveys the same lesson. (1). It implies unending succession and yet in the Absolute consciousness, the infinite series must be completed. One of the ablest discussions of the relation of Time to the Absolute is to be found in Professor Royce's great work, *The World and the Individual*. A condensed statement of his views is to be found in a note to his little book, *The Conception of Immortality*. Professor Royce convincingly explains that Eternity means neither the momentary now, nor timelessness, but the whole of Time which over-reaches the distinction between past, present and future. "Let the sequence be a, b, c. Then, in our *first* sense of the term *present*, when b is present, a is *no longer*, and c is *not yet*. And this fact makes the temporal sequence what it is. But in the *second* sense of the term *present*, a, b, c, despite this perfectly genuine but relative difference of *no longer* and *not yet* or of *past* and *future*, are *all* present as a *totum simul* to the consciousness that grasps the entire sequence" (*Conception of Immortality*, p. 86). "There is no sort of contradiction," Professor Royce goes on to observe, "in supposing a form of consciousness for which the events of the Archæan and of the Silurian and of the later

(1). Time, of course, is not a category in Hegel's Logic. It is an aspect of the 'otherness'—nature, in which the categories are embodied. This means that it has its ground-work in the categories, which, I think, is to be found in such categories as substance and accident, cause and effect etc.

geological periods should be present *at once* together with the facts of today's history" (*Ibid.*). The term *Eternal consciousness*, Professor Royce justly argues, does not mean consciousness *not in time* but "a consciousness whose span embraces the whole of Time". "What is present *at once* to such a consciousness, viz., the whole of what happens in time, taken together with all the distinctions of past and of future that hold *within* the series of temporal events—this whole, I say, constitutes *Eternity*." That a consciousness which is eternally complete must mean a whole within which the relative distinctions of past, present and future fall is indisputable, but it is also true that it is a notion entirely beyond us. It is not enough to say, as Professor Royce does, that we ourselves possess the type of an eternal consciousness. The time of our consciousness is, no doubt, a whole, but it is not a *complete* whole. It is interminable at both ends. But what for us is an interminable series and a complete whole only *ideally* must, for the Absolute, be a *really* complete whole. Have we the faintest conception of what this is like? Do we possess any idea of a "consciousness whose span embraces the whole of Time"? Because it must be so, it does not follow that we understand *how* it is so. Most readers, I am afraid, will find Professor Royce's reasoning in the supplementary essay at the end of the first volume of his Gifford lectures more subtle than convincing. The dilemma is that while we cannot deny that Time, as a complete series, is a real element of the Absolute, we have not the least idea as to what the higher consciousness is which has the idea of Time, with its antinomies perfectly solved. The indication, however, is that in the Absolute there are categories—modes of consciousness, which so supplement and modify Time as to free it from its inconsistencies. The contradiction of the category of Life, for example, disappears when it passes into Cognition, and the contradiction of Cognition is solved when it is viewed as a moment of the Absolute Idea. But the contradiction involved in the idea of Time as an infinite series, which is nevertheless a complete whole, is *not* overcome by the con-



sideration that the whole of Time is present to the Absolute consciousness. The Absolute has evidently a mode of consciousness—a category or categories into which the contradiction of Time vanishes and which, if it formed an element of our consciousness, would obviate for us too the difficulties involved in the idea of Time.

The admissions which we have made may, at first sight, seem to be fatal to the validity of the dialectical method, but a little reflection will serve to remove this doubt. The categories of human knowledge are constitutive elements of Reality, but in Reality there are more of them than come within the ken of human knowledge. Only a section of them is, so to speak, fenced off from their context and constitute human knowledge. As such, they present the appearance of an artificial aggregate. Nevertheless, the categories are organic elements of the Absolute and however much they may seem to be parted off from one another, as known to us, they are members one of another. They, therefore, as participators in one life, as different expressions of one Reality, are naturally drawn towards one another. They have a craving for each other and seek to come together. It is this underlying unity that the dialectic brings to light and becomes possible because of it. But there is another aspect of the matter. The categories though interwoven with one another as organic elements of a single whole are, in so far as they are factors of our knowledge, artificially kept asunder by their partial discontinuity arising from the fragmentariness of our knowledge. Their mutual relations, therefore, are somewhat puzzling to us. While driven resistlessly towards one another, they are yet unable to come completely together. It is this circumstance which makes the task of tracing out their mutual relations possible, but difficult. The categories being expressions of a single Reality, a connection between any two of them is discoverable, but it would seem to be natural, or forced and artificial, according to the extent of the breach of continuity between them. This is the reason why in Hegel's Logic, we find

that while in many, perhaps in the majority of instances, the transition of one category into another is perfectly natural and intelligible, there are other instances in which the dialectic is little better than verbal quibbling and the almost complete break-down of the argument is concealed by a cloud of words. This is only what was to be expected. When a missing link separates one category from another, it would be difficult to connect the one with the other, though it is not impossible; for, in virtue of the ultimate unity of all of them, there must be an affinity between any two of them.

There is thus a sense in which the dialectic is a subjective procedure, or, as Green says, "an interrogation of subjective consciousness." The inter-connections between the categories which we succeed in tracing out are only such as exist between them *as elements of our knowledge* and not as they really are between the phases of the Absolute, as known to the Absolute. But this does not mean that our knowledge is merely subjective or false. It is subjective, because it is not *completely* objective, but valid so far as it goes, and, to that extent, objective. With the growth of knowledge, new elements of it are brought to light and its old relations have necessarily to be recast and modified, but the incomplete knowledge, although absorbed and transformed into the more complete knowledge, does not cease to be valid on its own level. All development implies the absorption of the lower stage into the higher stage, but the lower stage is not thereby proved to be unreal. When we, doubting and hesitating, spell out piece-meal the relations between the elements of Reality, we are veritably in touch with it, though touch with Reality does not mean an exhaustive knowledge of it. Hegel's contention that philosophic knowledge is Absolute knowledge or God's knowledge of Himself is not wrong, only that he is apt to forget the correlative truth that, in man, God knows Himself under the conditions and limitations of human knowledge. (1).

(1). Thirteen years ago, when I wrote my article on "Some aspects of

After what has been already stated, it is not necessary to say much on the third branch of our inquiry, *viz.*, the relation of man's experience to the content of Absolute Experience. There is an idea that the Logical categories are complete by themselves and the transition from Logic to nature is similar to the transition from a lower category to a higher category. This supposed transition to nature has always been regarded by the critics of Hegelianism as its weakest point and their main attack has accordingly been directed to that point. Schelling, for example, laid the flattering unction to his soul that he had demolished Hegelianism once and for all by showing that nature could not be deduced from pure Thought. In truth, however, Hegel was never so absurd as to imagine that he could deduce empirical facts *a priori*. He has repeatedly told us that nature is the other of Thought. If nature has no meaning apart from Thought, it is equally true that Thought has no meaning apart from nature. Thought without nature is empty and nature without Thought, a non-entity. Logic is an exposition of God as He is in Himself before creation, but the existence of God before creation, Hegel has expressly told us, is an unreal abstraction. He exists only as revealed in the world. Logic deals with the universal aspect of Reality, but the universal is an abstraction apart from particularity. Nature is the totality of the particular elements in which the Logical Idea is realised and apart from which it has no being. There is, therefore, no transition at all from Logic to nature. In passing on from Logic to the Philosophy of Nature, Hegel does not pretend to *deduce* nature, but only draws attention to the element of particularity implied throughout the Logic, but abstracted from, for purposes of exposition. Absolute Hegel's Philosophy" in the *Philosophical Review* (New York) I had not arrived at my present conclusions. I then argued that the change in the relations between the categories which the discovery of new categories must mean, invalidates the dialectical method altogether. I did not then sufficiently realise that Development is more than mere contrariety. (*Philosophical Review*, Vol. V, No. 3, p. 274-75.)



Thought is embodied in Absolute Experience and nature is a part of Absolute Experience.

I have said that nature is part of Absolute Experience. This is not what Hegel says but what, in order to save his philosophy from utter self-stultification, he ought to have said. He supposes that in nature, the Logical Idea is completely realised and that the Logic expresses the whole universe. Both the propositions are absolutely untenable. The conclusion which Hegel draws from these false premisses of course is, that in God there is nothing which is not manifested in the sensible world. As Professor Pringle-Pattison rightly says, "in preaching the truth that the Absolute is revealed in the world of its appearances, not craftily concealed behind them, Hegel seems to pass to a sheer identification of the two. But while it is true that the two aspects must be everywhere combined—an Absolute which does not appear or reveal itself, and an appearance without something which appears being correlative abstractions—that is not tantamount to saying that the appearance of the Absolute to itself—the Divine Life as lived by God Himself—is identical with the appearance which the world presents to the Hegelian philosopher." (*Two Lectures on Theism*, p. 36). Hegel, however, finds nature, even as it is known to us, rather a hard nut to crack. It refuses to be squeezed into his symmetrically constructed scheme of categories. Evidently, it is more than a mere embodiment of the categories recognised in his Logic. Instead of frankly admitting, under the circumstances, that the Logic is *not* a complete exposition of the Absolute, Hegel adopts the strange course of disparaging nature. In so far as he fails to understand it, it is not rational at all! He concludes that there is an element of contingency in nature of which no rational explanation is possible, and does not stop to enquire whether such a conclusion is consistent with his fundamental principles and whether the seeming contingency of nature may not be due to the fact that it is the incomplete expression of a Thought richer and more comprehensive than that of which

the Logic is the exposition. Because he fails to explain all the mysteries of nature, Hegel seems to bear a sort of grudge against it. He never misses an opportunity of belittling it. He, for example, is unwilling to recognise the beauty of nature. Beauty, he tells us, belongs to Art rather than to nature. In the starry heavens above, which filled the mind of Immanuel Kant with awe and wonder, Hegel finds only eruptions in the face of the sky! The philosopher, in his study, makes up his mind that inasmuch as he with his logical tape, as wonderful as Aladin's lamp, has taken a full measure of the Absolute Thought, nature, as the embodiment of that Thought, shall be intelligible through and through and all mystery shall vanish from it. But nature does not obey the philosopher any more than the waves obeyed Canute. What wonder then that he should lose all patience with it, and unable to punish it in any other way, pour contempt on it!

Nature is a part of Absolute Experience and is not co-extensive with it. It is the name given to only so much of the section of Reality which our senses can cognise as is the subject of common discourse, and is the product of inter-subjective communication. It is, therefore, a mere skeleton. The living Reality is a much bigger thing and has endless aspects of which our senses take in only a few. From God, Spinoza truly observes, an infinite number of things follow in an infinite number of ways. It is the ignorance and vanity of man that lead him to imagine that his perception is the measure of Reality. Are we the sole demizens of the universe to whom Reality is revealed? The dumb creatures around us are presumably capable of perception and not mere automata, as Descartes imagined. They too belong to the Absolute and participate in its life. Some measure of the self-revelation of the Absolute is vouch-safed to them too. The aspects of Reality presented to them are, in their own grades, as much real as those presented to us, but, evidently, they are different. The bird that flies in the air, the fish that lives in

water and the worm that crawls on earth has each a perception of Reality with which ours can have very little in common. The vulture feeding on the carcass surely finds its repast as enjoyable as the banquet provided for us by Peliti or Kellner! Evidently, the filthy drain is to the rat what the finest quarters of Simla or Darjeeling are to us! How, one wonders, does the world look to the house-lizard that creeps over the ceiling! Can we deny that the Absolute Experience must include and is the source of all these diverse experiences? It is the pride of man that makes him rebel against the notion. If the rat in the drain could philosophise, it would, no doubt, dogmatise that the world, in its true nature, is as it appears to it. And if there be beings higher than man in the universe, what reason there is to suppose that they do not exceed man's measure of the perception of Reality? The truth is that the experiences of all finite creatures, however humble and however exalted, are included, supplemented and rearranged in the Absolute Experience. It is, therefore, a much bigger thing than any finite being can comprehend. The Absolute Experience is the embodiment of Absolute Thought and if the Absolute Thought is infinitely richer than ours, so must the Absolute Experience be. Our notion of Reality is very much like the blind man's idea of the elephant in the fable. One blind man touching a leg of the elephant says that the elephant is like a pillar; another, touching the ear, says that it is like the winnowing fan; a third touching the trunk declares that the elephant is like the thigh. The elephant, of course, is much more than these blind men imagine, though the perception of it of every one of them is quite correct, so far as it goes.

There is a fine passage in the *Sartor Resartus* which inimitably expresses the truth. "Systems of Nature;" observes Carlyle, "To the wisest man, wide as is his vision, Nature remains of quite *infinite* depth, of quite infinite expression; and all experience thereof limits itself to some few computed centuries and measured square miles. The course of Nature's phases, on this our little fraction of a planet, is partially known to us; but



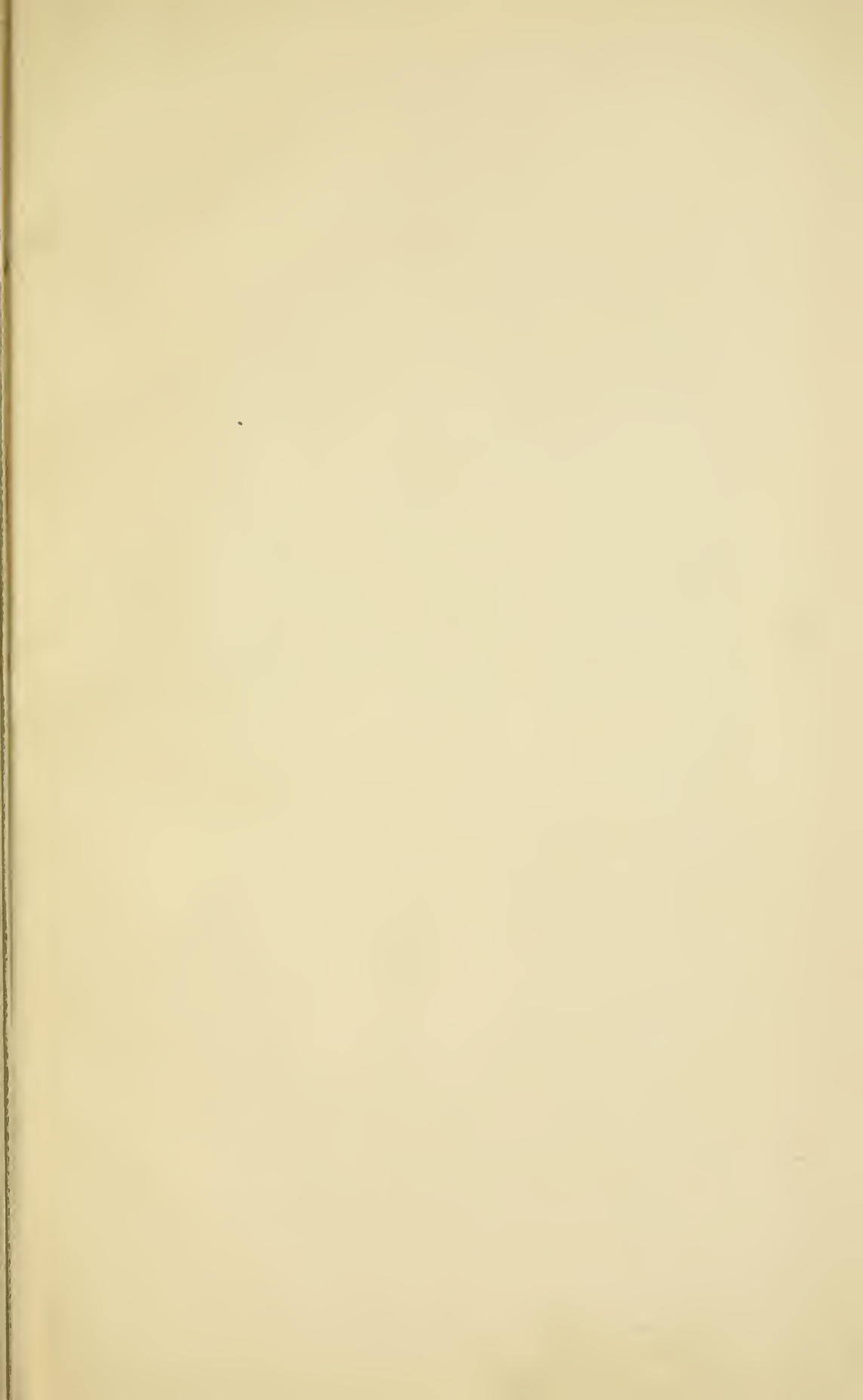
who knows what deeper courses these depend on—what infinitely larger Cycle (of causes) our little Epicycle revolves on? To the minnow every cranny and pebble, and quality and accident of its little native creek may have become familiar; but does the minnow understand the Ocean Tides, and periodic currents, the Trade-Winds, and Monsoons, and Moon's Eclipses; by all which the condition of its little creek is regulated, and may, from time to time (*un* miraculously enough) be quite upset and reversed? Such a minnow is man; his creek this planet Earth; his Ocean the immeasurable All; his Monsoons and Periodic currents the mysterious course of Providence through Aeons of Aeons."

Such a theory as I have endeavoured to sketch out in this essay, goes, I think, as far in the direction of a knowledge of the Absolute as it is possible to go. We can reasonably conclude that man is a partial manifestation of a self-differentiation of the Absolute, which is the ideality of his body. His knowledge and experience forms part of the Absolute Thought and Experience and is valid so far as it goes. What he understands and perceives, the Absolute understands and perceives *in him*, but the Absolute understands and perceives infinitely more than he ever does. It is sheer presumption to equate the content of the Divine consciousness with the world in which we live. Such an absurdity is by no means a necessary consequence of Hegelianism. There is nothing in the fundamental principles of Hegel's philosophy which makes its air of omniscience necessary. It is the accident and not the essence of the system, and is due to the personal equation of Hegel. Every man has his crotchets and the greater the man, the more preposterous his crotchets often are. The notion that Reality is fully and exhaustively revealed to human knowledge is, it seems to me, only a crotchet of Hegel's. It is also, partly, the result of an extreme reaction against the medieval dualism of the sensible and the super-sensible world. Agnosticism may be bad, but a cheap Gnosticism is worse. It, I think, has a rather

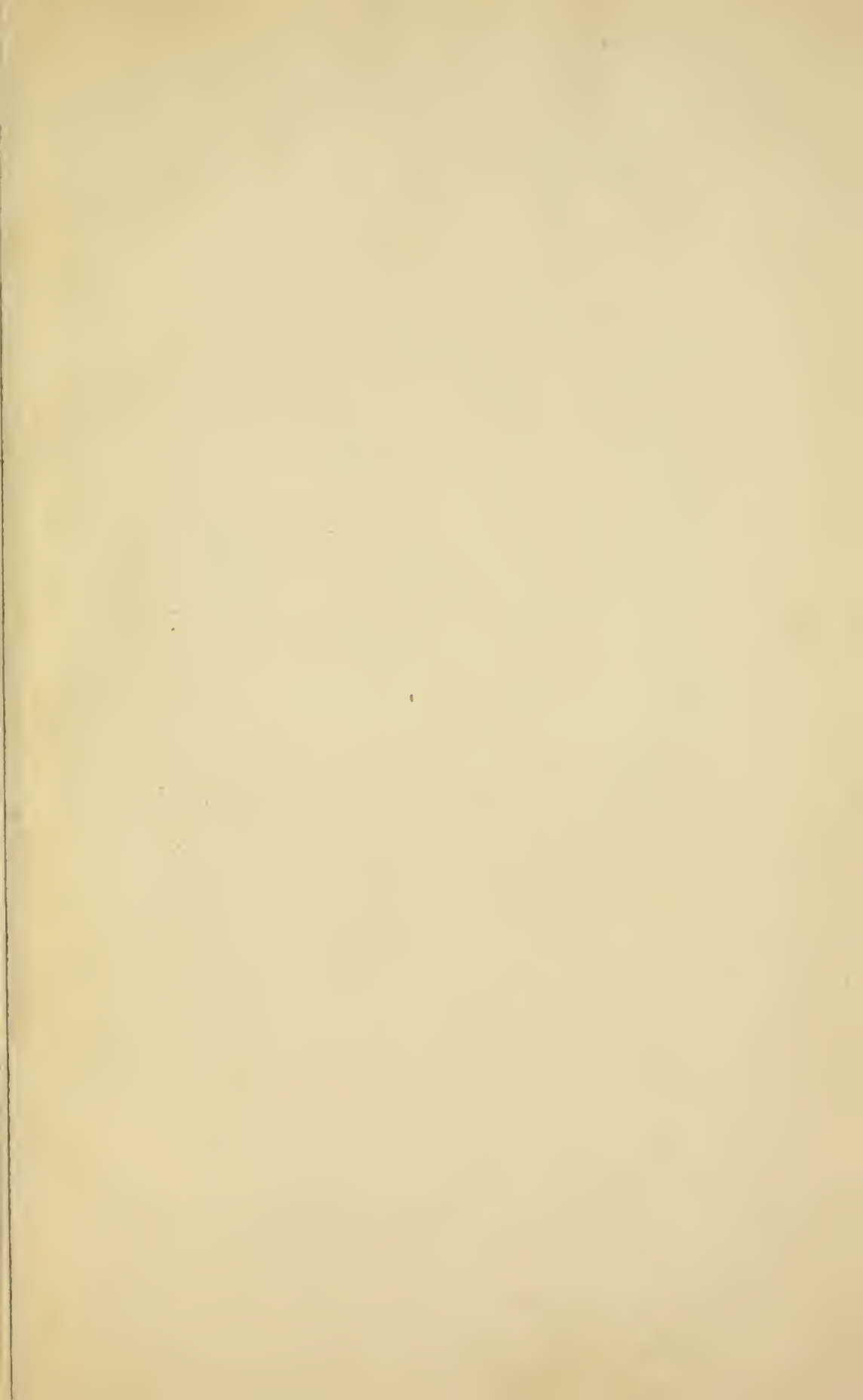
disastrous effect on some of the better sides of human nature. Agnosticism, kept within proper limits, is, after all, not so very bad a thing as some people imagine. It, at any rate, keeps alive the sentiments of wonder and reverence without which man would be a very unamiable being indeed. The Absolute is undoubtedly within our knowledge, but is also over and beyond it. In the wise words of Professor Pringle-Pattison, we may conclude that "the truth about the Absolute which we extract from our experience is hardly likely to be the final truth; it may be taken up and superseded in a wider and fuller truth. And in this way we might pass, in successive cycles of finite existence, from sphere to sphere of experience, from orb to orb of truth; and even the highest would still remain a finite truth; and fall infinitely short of truth. But such a doctrine of relativity in no way invalidates the truth of the revelation at any given stage. The fact that the truth I reach is the truth for me, does not make it, on that account, less true. It is true so far as it goes, and if my experience can carry me no further, I am justified in treating it as ultimate *until it is superseded*. Should it ever be superseded I shall then see both how it is modified by being comprehended in a higher truth, and also how it and no other statement of the truth could have been true at my former stand-point. But *before* that higher stand-point is reached to seek to discredit our present insight by the general reflection that its truth is partial and requires correction, is a perfectly empty truth, which, in its bearing upon human life, must almost certainly have the effect of an untruth." (*Two lectures on Theism, PP, 61-62.*)













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